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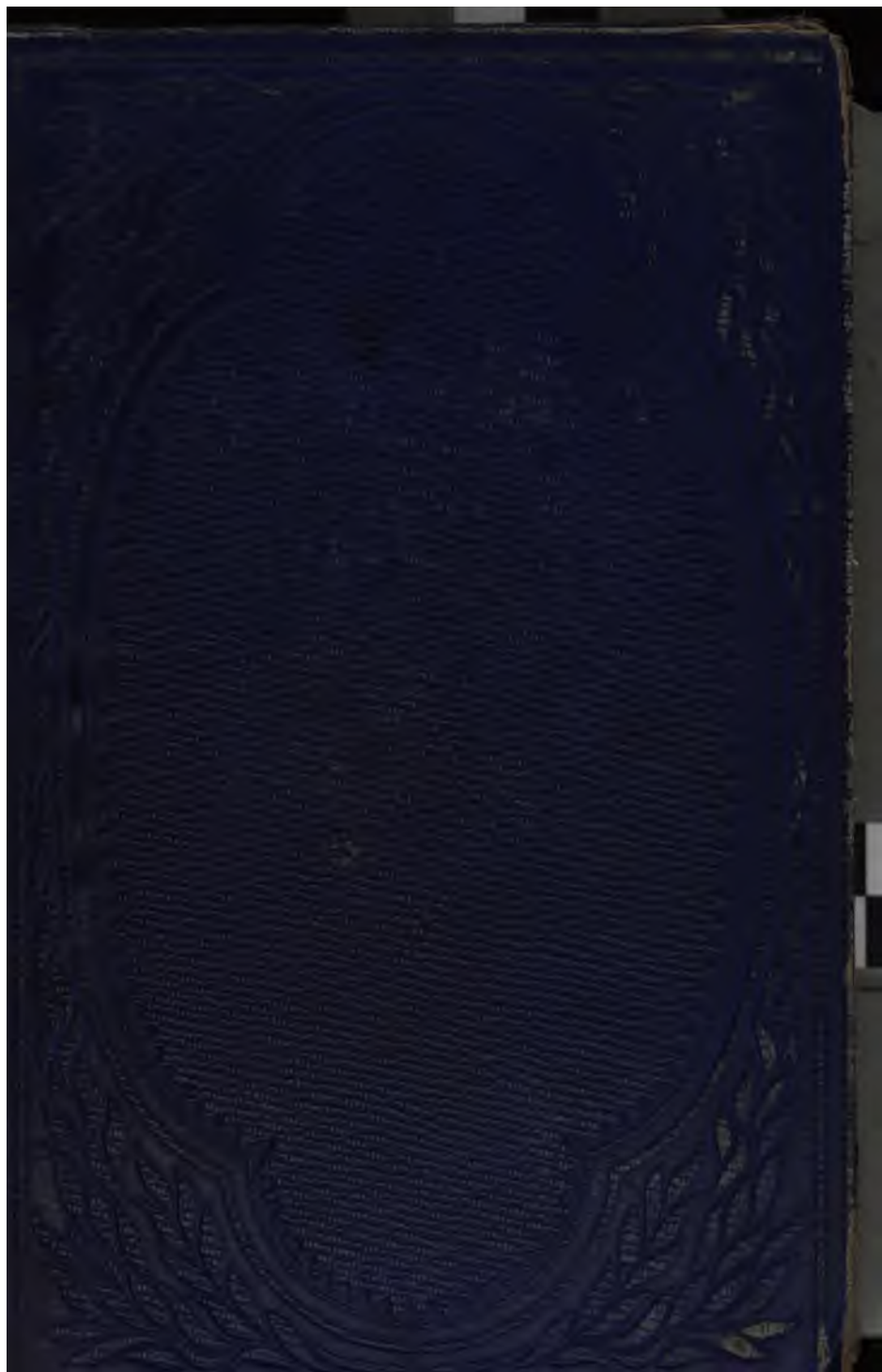
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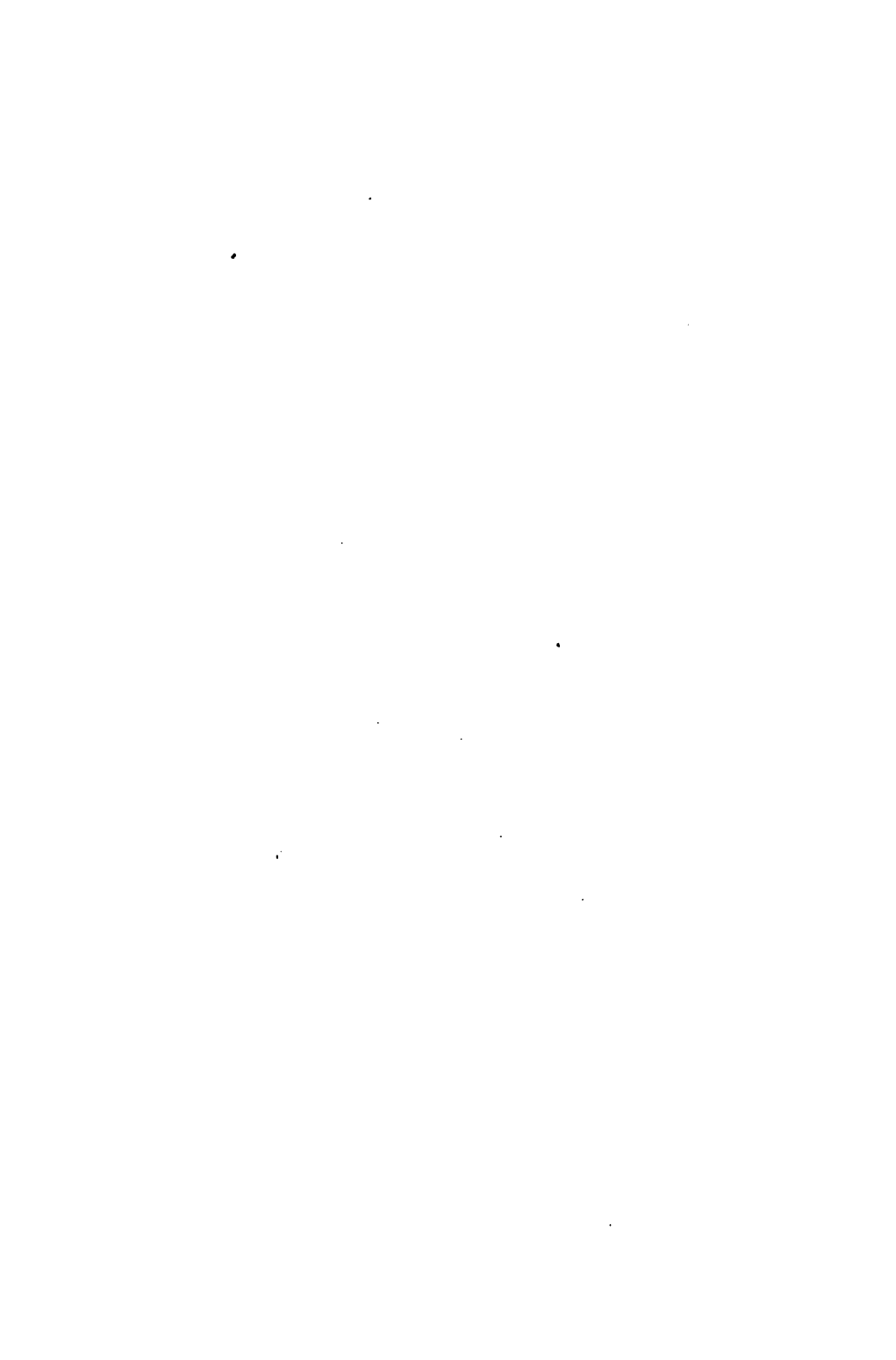
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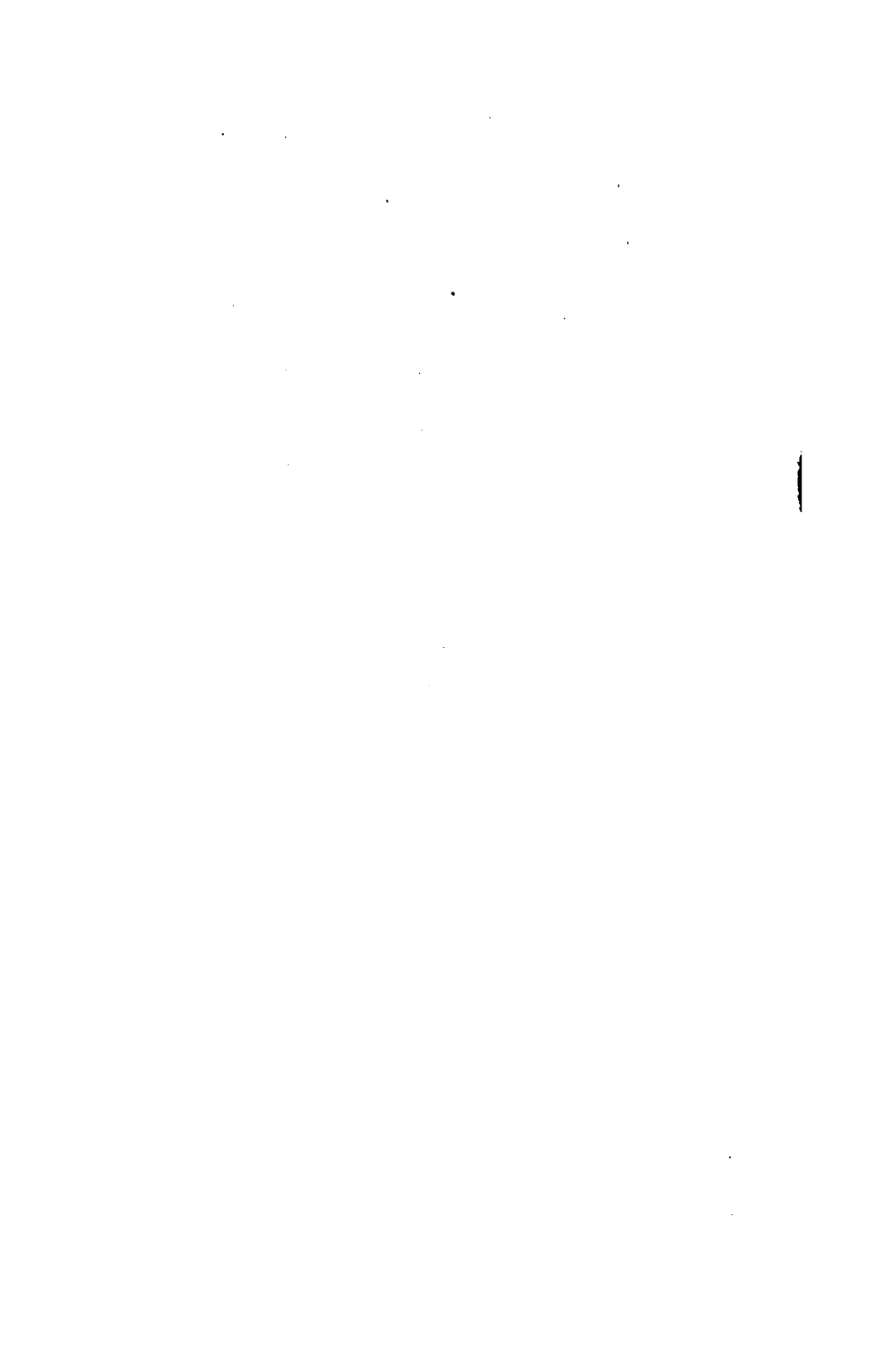














THE  
LIVES OF THE SIGNERS

OF THE

Declaration of Independence.

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BY

N. DWIGHT, ESQ.

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## TO THE READER.

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The following work has been compiled principally with a view to its introduction into schools, throughout our country. It was believed by the author, that a general knowledge of the distinguished men, whose names are set to the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, would at all times be considered as desirable by the young and rising generations of the union. That the names and characters of those persons who risked their lives in defence of their country's rights, liberties, and privileges, and under whose counsels its independence was achieved, and established, should be had in remembrance to the latest period of time, will be acknowledged by all. The history of them which has been published, is too voluminous, and too expensive, for a very large proportion of the community; and altogether inconvenient to be used as a reading book for schools. This publication is fixed at so moderate a price, as to be within the reach of all who may wish to put it into the hands of their children, or to introduce it into their families. As such it is submitted to the public.





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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES**  
**OF THE**  
**SIGNERS**  
**OF THE**  
**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.**

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE.**

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**JOSIAH BARTLETT.**

DOCTOR JOSIAH BARTLETT was of French extract. His ancestors went from Normandy, in France, and settled in the south of England, at a very early date of English history. One branch of the family, in the seventeenth century, came to America, and settled at Beverly, in Massachusetts. From thence, succeeding generations scattered into various towns in Massachusetts. Stephen, the father of Josiah, married a Miss Webster, and settled in Amesbury, in that province. In that town Josiah was born, in the month of November, 1729. It does not appear that he received a regular classical education at any college; but having, by other means, acquired some knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, he, at the age of sixteen years, commenced the study of medicine in his native town, under the tuition of Doctor Ordway, who was a distant relative of the family. As private libraries at that age of the country, were neither numerous nor extensive, Mr. Bartlett, having a taste for literary improvement, sought and obtained access to those of gentlemen in neighboring towns, having early gone through with that of his instructor. He faithfully improved his opportunities, and

privileges, insomuch, that at the close of his medical education, he was deemed well qualified to commence the practical duties of his profession.

With a view to an establishment in the medical practice, he settled himself at Kingston, in New Hampshire. There he soon became distinguished, as a skillful and successful practitioner, and acquired an extensive and lucrative employment. His success in treating a disease of a malignant character, (denominated, in common language, at that time, "Black Canker,") which was suddenly, and almost universally mortal, and which resisted the treatment of the faculty, gave to Doctor Bartlett the reputation of possessing pre-eminent skill. And to this he was justly entitled; for his success was the result of deep investigation, and decision of character; a decision that refused to be bound down by arbitrary theories, and resolved to act according to the dictates of his own judgment, in cases in which the judgment of others had proved almost universally erroneous. In that respect, he seems to have resembled the immortal Sydenham.

Perhaps nothing will more endear a man to his fellow citizens than a successful practice of physic, in cases where others have failed, and where many lives have been saved from immediate death, apparently by the instrumentality of superior skill. If his moral character is irreproachable, such a physician is an object of much more than common esteem and respect in a community. Such was the general and professional character of Doctor Bartlett. And this, combined with an amiable temper, affability of manners, instructive conversation, uprightness of conduct, inflexible integrity, and promptness in deciding and acting, all concurred in rendering him extensively popular. He was also a stern unbending republican in his principles; and no special proffers of royal favor would allure him to desert the path which duty pointed out as his course.

He early received the commission of a civil magistrate, and about the same time, the command of a regiment of militia; both of which offices were conferred during the administration of Governor Benning Wentworth. In 1765, during that administration, he entered on his political career, as a representative to the provincial legislature from Kingston. He there had opportunity to learn the mercenary conduct of the royal governor, and the subserviency of a majority of the representatives to the will and views of the royal governor. Here, though in a minority, an upright performance of his

duty required him to oppose measures which he deemed corrupt, and to record his vote against what he deemed flagrant violations of moral rectitude, on the part of the administration, and unwarrantable usurpations, by which the rights of the people were wantonly trampled on.

In granting charters for new towns, Governor Wentworth would reserve some of the most valuable rights for himself, and others for the benefit of the episcopal church, as glebe lands. His successor, (who was his nephew,) and came into the office in 1768, adopted the plan of his uncle, re-granted some towns that had been granted by his predecessor, and chartered new towns, so that they interfered, and clashed with former grants. But he was never, in these acts, unmindful of his own emolument. He always took especial care to appropriate some of the best tracts to himself. There were numerous individuals whose interest was sacrificed by this conduct. They felt aggrieved. The people generally were puritans, and felt no partiality for episcopacy. They disapproved of the grants of glebe lands for the benefit of the episcopal church, apprehending that it was leading to an establishment of a privileged order of religion, like that in England. Both looked around them for a leader, who would espouse and vindicate their interests; and in Doctor Bartlett they found their champion. He was from principle with them; and he fearlessly placed himself in bold opposition to regal power, in support of the rights of the people which were already, in some instances, shamelessly sacrificed to feed official cupidity, or to strengthen the arm of the ministry at home

These were some of the causes which operated on the feelings of the inhabitants of New Hampshire, and predisposed them to unite with those of other colonies in open resistance, so soon as the ministerial usurpations became manifest, and oppressive to the people. That time was now at hand.

At the termination of the French war, the heavy expenses incurred in its prosecution furnished the ostensible ground. It was said, that it was waged and carried on especially for the defence of the American colonies, and that was made the pretext for taxing the colonists, that they might be compelled to bear the burden incurred for their benefit. The colonists did not deny that they ought to bear their portion of the expense; but they did deny the right of parliament to tax them without their consent, and without their being represented in

parliament; and they maintained that they had furnished their quota of men, and their proportion of the expenses of the war. In 1767, Governor John Wentworth, perceiving that Doctor Bartlett was a leading and influential member of the legislative assembly, resorted to the same measure that Governor Hutchinson did in Massachusetts. He tried to sway him by the gift of office. He appointed him a justice of the peace; evidently, as appeared afterwards, to induce him to use his influence in favor of the royal interests. But, in this he failed entirely. For, in the session of the assembly that next followed that appointment, Doctor Bartlett, true to his principles, strenuously opposed the grant which the governor called for.

By the year 1774, the opposition to the British interest, which had hitherto been a minority, received so many accessions, that it was foreseen it would soon become a majority. The governor resorted to a measure for preventing that result, which evidently, and contrary to his calculations, accelerated it. He arbitrarily caused three new members to be added to that body, from towns much less populous than several others which were left unrepresented; and because they were known partizans to the royal cause. The imprudent and overbearing conduct of one of them alarmed some, who had before been supine, and decided others who were wavering, on the side of opposition.

The conduct of the governor and his adherents, keeping steadily in view the plans of the British ministry, and the successive and increasing evidence of their ultimate purpose, which their measures and conduct furnished—alarmed the citizens for the safety of their rights and privileges, as British subjects, and stimulated them to devise measures for their defence against ministerial intrigues and despotism. Hence, in 1774, some of the leaders of the opposition began to hold private meetings. Doctor Bartlett was always an active and influential leader in those meetings. The time had now arrived for the assembly to display the banner of resistance to British power. In 1774, the house, conforming to the example of other assemblies, appointed a committee of correspondence. The governor took the alarm, and in the exercise of his executive authority, dissolved the assembly. They dispersed, but on a call from the committee, they assembled again, and acted without the governor's aid or authority. They, by their circular, requested the towns to choose delegates to a convention, to meet in Exeter, with the

express object in view, of choosing delegates to attend the congress in September, in Philadelphia. This convention, among other important transactions, chose Doctor Bartlett, and John Pickering, Esq. as their delegates to the general congress. Mr. Pickering did not accept the appointment; and Doctor Bartlett, having recently had his house consumed by fire, was unable to leave his family; and, consequently, did not attend. Early in the year 1775, by Governor Wentworth's orders, his name was struck from the commission of the peace, and he was dismissed from his military command. Several of his patriotic associates received the like treatment at the same time.

In 1775, the former minority having become a strong majority in the house of assembly, in opposition to Governor Wentworth, he summoned a new assembly. But the inconsistent conduct of General Gage, and the blood of Americans, which had been previously shed in Lexington, Massachusetts, had so far roused the spirit of the people of New Hampshire, that he succeeded no better with this, than with the assembly he had recently dissolved. They signified that they would repose no confidence in the propositions of the British parliament that had been submitted to them, nor discover any spirit of conciliation in them, while they were accompanied with acts of open hostility.

On receiving the communications of the governor, at the opening of their session, they requested a short adjournment, to allow them time to examine the important measures recommended for their decision. This was granted. And, on their coming together, after their term of adjournment had elapsed, they clearly indicated their feelings, by expelling the three new members from the house. This was done in compliance with a recommendation of the convention. One of these members, having given offence to the people by his language out of the house, was assaulted by the inhabitants of Portsmouth. He took refuge in the governor's house. But he was demanded in such a threatening and peremptory manner, that he found it necessary, for his own safety, to deliver him up to the people. Thus it became manifest that the governor's authority had become prostrated, and he found it necessary for his own safety, to retire on board an English man of war, then lying in the harbour. In all the steps taken by the patriots of New Hampshire, in opposition to the British projects and regal authority, Doctor Bartlett was always a consistent and uniform partizan; and one of the most con-



spicuous leaders. On the expulsion of those obnoxious members, the governor immediately adjourned the assembly. They came together, according to adjournment, in June. In that assembly, Doctor Bartlett found himself encumbered with arduous duties. He was not only a member of that body, but of the committee of safety, and of the provincial convention. The governor, however, sent a messenger to the house, and adjourned them to a future day. He had retired from what he deemed an unsafe situation, in New Hampshire, to Boston; in September he went to the Isle of Shoals, within the limits of his government; and from thence, issued his proclamation, in which he adjourned the legislative assembly to April of the following year. This was his last official act as governor of New Hampshire, and the close of the British government in that province—a government that had existed for the term of ninety-five years.

The absconding of the governor left the province destitute of any legitimate government; but the provincial congress assumed the government, with the approbation of the people. That congress continued the existence of the committee of safety, and authorized it to exercise, during their recess, all the powers of civil government, executive and legislative. That congress re-appointed Doctor Bartlett to the command of a regiment.

In August, 1775, he was again chosen a delegate to the continental congress, and took his seat in that venerable assembly in September following. There, like the other devoted patriots, who had given their whole powers to promote the cause of their country, he attended ably, and with exemplary fidelity to the discharge of those duties which were devolved on him. He once, and for but a short time, visited his family; and then hastened back to the scene of his public services, and devoted himself to them until the close of his term. In 1776, he was again elected. He now had, for his colleagues, William Whipple and John Langdon, Esquires. In June, of that year, he was appointed one of the committee for devising a plan of confederation, for uniting the colonies in a general government, to enable congress the better to bring forth the energies of the country, and to maintain the arduous conflict in which the country was involved.

After the Declaration of Independence had been discussed in congress for a considerable time; it having been ascertained that there was a decided majority in congress, ready

o vote in its favor. On the fourth day of July, when the decision was to be irrevocably made, congress, beginning with the most northern state, called on Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire, who gave his answer in the affirmative. The other colonies being called in regular order, the question was decided. John Hancock, being then president of congress, first signed the instrument, and the next signature was that of Josiah Bartlett. (He was the first who voted for, and the second who signed the Declaration of the Independence of the United States of North America.)

He was again elected to the same station in 1777, but did not attend congress, by reason of ill health. But in the year following, he returned to his duties in that body, which had then retired to Yorktown, in consequence of the British having occupied Philadelphia.

After Philadelphia was evacuated by the enemy, congress re-assembled there; and in their return from Yorktown, some of the members, and he among them, were exposed to considerable danger, on their way, from those freebooters who were stiled "Cow-boys."

In October, 1778, he obtained leave of absence from congress, and returned to his family; where his private affairs needed his superintendence. These had suffered derangement, and sustained loss, by reason of his long absence, and he found it inexpedient for him to return to congress again. Consequently, he did not again take his seat.

After his return to New Hampshire, he was, in 1779, appointed chief justice of the court of common pleas, for the county in which he resided; and the next year, muster-master of the troops then raising in that state, for the continental service, for a term of three years, and "during the war." In 1782, he was appointed a side judge of their first court; and in 1788, he was promoted to the office of chief justice.

He was an influential advocate, in the convention of New Hampshire, for the adoption of the federal constitution of the United States; and, when it went into operation, he was elected a senator to the first congress that assembled under that constitution, in the city of New York. But he declined that office, and did not attend.

In 1790, he was chosen president of New Hampshire. He continued to perform the responsible duties of that office till 1793, at which time he was elected the first governor that New Hampshire ever had, as an independent state.

After continuing in that office about one year, he closed his long, honorable, and useful public life, by resigning the chief magistracy of the state, and retired to the repose of private life, enjoying the grateful esteem of a community, in whose service he had spent many years, and for whose benefit he had devoted his best talents and efforts. Here he might reflect, with a good conscience, on a well-spent life; and, had it been permitted to him, he might have contemplated with pleasing anticipations, the rising prosperity, and future greatness of the nation, whose independent existence he magnanimously declared, at a time which was appalling, and when many men's hearts were failing them with fear. But he was allowed this indulgence only for a short season. For in May, 1795, he closed his earthly existence, in the sixty-sixth year of his age.

His wife, whose family name also was Bartlett, died six years previous to her husband, leaving an estimable character among her surviving acquaintance. His sons are justly distinguished among the most respectable and eminent citizens of New Hampshire.



### WILLIAM WHIPPLE.

In 1759, when he was but twenty-nine years of age, Mr. Whipple quitted the sea-faring life, and entered into mercantile business in Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, in connection with his brother Joseph Whipple; and the connection was continued, until one or two years before the revolutionary war began.

He early espoused the cause of the colonies, in opposition to the claims of the British government, and manifested such an ardent patriotic zeal in favor of his native country, that he soon became distinguished by his fellow citizens; and was, by their united suffrages, appointed to several offices of trust and importance, at that period. In him, firmness and moderation were happily blended; and in their exercise, he never disappointed the confidence reposed in him by his constituents. When the citizens of New Hampshire deemed it expedient to call a provincial congress, to elect delegates to the continental congress, Mr. Whipple was chosen, by the

citizens of Portsmouth, one of their representatives to that body. He attended its meeting, which was held in Exeter, in May 1775, and was then chosen one of the provincial committee of safety; an executive body, whose business it was to regulate the general concerns of the government during the continuance of the war. Soon after this he was placed on the committee of safety for the town of Portsmouth. The reader of these memoirs will doubtless recollect the great importance of such committees, in sustaining the cause of America, during that period when the utmost vigilance and precaution were required, to guard against the intrigues of internal enemies and spies, and secret emissaries sent into the colonies by the enemy. The office was one of vast importance, and required constant activity, and great prudence and firmness, in those to whom was entrusted the discharge of its duties.

In 1775, the people of New Hampshire formed a temporary government, comprised of a house of representatives, and a council of twelve members; Mr. Whipple was chosen a member of the council. Within one month from that election, viz. on the twenty-third of January 1776, he was appointed a delegate to the general congress in Philadelphia. He took his seat in the month following for the first time, and in the course of the year, set his name to the Declaration of Independence. He was re-elected to the same office for each of the three years, immediately following. Within that period he was occasionally absent from his seat in congress, serving the public in the military department. The remainder of the term he was president, and attended to the discharge of his duties with diligence and fidelity, until the middle of September, 1779, when he finally retired from congress. During his continuance a member of the great council of the nation, his previous acquaintance with maritime and commercial pursuits, rendered him an important member of committees to which these two great interests of the public were submitted. He was appointed one of the superintendents of commissary and quarter-master's departments, in which, it was alledged, much irregularity and improper management had existed, by which the public had been abused and defrauded. It required much labor and patient investigation, to ascertain and correct the evils; and to place those departments on such a foundation, as would, in the best manner practicable, secure the public from similar abuses, and promote the service of the country in future. To these

duties, Mr. Whipple applied himself with great assiduity, and much benefit to the cause of his country. He was one of those members of congress who assumed a firm stand in opposition to the proposal, warmly advocated by some, for issuing farther emissions of a paper currency, after the continental money of previous emissions had become greatly depreciated. He, with some others, contended, that the system had already been pursued to a very dangerous extent ; and the proposal for carrying it still farther, was fraught with extreme danger ; and if actually pursued to a greater extent, the apprehended danger would inevitably be realized, in a total destruction of the public credit.

In the beginning of 1780, the office of a commissioner of the board of admiralty was offered to Mr. Whipple ; but, for reasons growing out of his private affairs, he declined the offer.

In the year 1777, while Mr. Whipple was a member of congress ; at the time when General Burgoyne was advancing from Canada upon the northern frontier, at the head of a powerful combined army of disciplined troops and savages ; by whose approach the border settlers were threatened with destruction, and the whole northern and eastern states were justly alarmed at the danger with which the country was menaced in that quarter, Mr. Whipple was called, by the government of New Hampshire, to gird on the military armour, and go forth to meet the enemy. The militia of that state were divided into two brigades ; one was placed under the command of General Stark, and the other under that of General Whipple. General Stark, in obedience to his orders, marched with a part of the force to encounter the enemy, and check his progress by every means in his power. He met Lieutenant Colonel Baum at Bennington in Vermont with his undisciplined militia, and gained the well known victory, that decked him and his patriotic band with laurels, which will remain flourishing so long as history endures. While General Stark, and his detachment, were gathering a harvest of imperishable glory for themselves, and achieving great benefits to the American cause, General Whipple marched at the head of a combined force, consisting of a large part of his brigade, and volunteers from all parts of New Hampshire, to join the army under command of General Gates at Saratoga, and Stillwater in New York. When General Burgoyne was compelled to surrender his army to the victorious troops under Gates, the latter appointed Gene-

ral Whipple and Colonel Wilkinson as his representatives, to meet two officers of the British army to settle the articles which grew out of the conditions proposed by the commander in chief of the British army. After all the terms of capitulation were settled, and preparatory measures for the purpose adjusted, General Whipple was selected as one of the officers appointed to command the marching of the British troops to the encampment appointed for them by congress at Winterhill in the vicinity of Boston.

There is an anecdote connected with this expedition of General Whipple, which is deemed too valuable to be omitted in the history of his life.

When General Whipple set out to join the army, he took with him for his waiting servant, a colored man named Prince, one whom he had imported from Africa many years before. He was a slave whom his master highly valued. As he advanced on his journey, he said to Prince, "If we should be called into an engagement with the enemy, I expect you will behave like a man of courage, and fight like a brave soldier for your country." Prince feelingly replied, "Sir, I have no inducement to fight, I have no country while I am a slave. If I had my freedom, I would endeavor to defend it to the last drop of my blood." This reply of Prince produced the effect on his master's heart which Prince desired. The general declared him free on the spot. The act was certainly highly to the general's honor; had he not done so, the character of Prince would have stood forth the fairest of the two.

In 1778, when a British force was in possession of Rhode Island, and a concerted plan of attacking them had been agreed upon by a combined force of the French and Americans—the French by water with their fleet under command of the Count d'Estaing; and the Americans by land under General Sullivan—General Whipple joined Sullivan with a detachment of the New Hampshire militia. By the surprising conduct of Count d'Estaing, one of the fairest opportunities for weakening the British, and of obtaining a splendid victory in favor of the United States, which was presented during the revolutionary war, was entirely frustrated. The consequence of his strange and most unaccountable conduct was extreme disappointment, mortification, and disgust, on the part of the Americans; and impelled by those feelings, many of the militia who had collected for the occasion, believing that nothing valuable would be achieved, left the se:

vice. In a few days, the army under General Sullivan was reduced by desertion, to nearly one half its numbers, [which had been collected for besieging the British in Newport.] In consequence of this, which was the result of Count d'Estaing's perverse conduct, the situation of Sullivan's forces became extremely critical. He consequently raised the siege of Newport, and withdrew his troops to the north part of the island; and soon after, crossed the river and retreated to Tiverton.

The design for calling out the militia having thus failed, many of them were discharged; and General Whipple with those under his command, returned to New Hampshire. He was engaged in that mortifying and abortive expedition about six weeks.

The people manifested their confidence in him, and their approbation of his services as their representative in the general congress, immediately on his retiring from it, by repeatedly returning him a member of their state legislature.

After congress had constituted Robert Morris superintendent of finance for the government, he appointed a receiver in each of the several states. For those agencies, not generally popular, and very arduous in the duties which they involved, the superintendent invariably selected those men whose characters were established for strict integrity and patriotism. With General Whipple he had been acquainted in congress, and his estimation of his character may be determined by the fact, that he selected him for that office in New Hampshire. This took place in 1782. He had not retained the office more than one year, before he became desirous of relinquishing it. The backwardness of the legislature in aiding him to collect the sums appointed to be paid by New Hampshire, as her quota of the national expenses, their almost total disregard of his communication on the subject, and the sluggishness of the state in paying the revenue for which they were assessed, so disgusted General Whipple, that he urged Mr. Morris to suffer him to withdraw from the office, and that another man might be appointed to supply his place. The spirit of the citizens, and the difficulties to be encountered in performing the duties of that office, may be inferred from the fact, that although he received his commission in May, 1782, and he had labored continually to forward the collection of money, that he might be able to remit something for the public service, then in a most suffering condition; it was not till January, 1784, after peace

took place, that he was enabled to make his first remittance to the treasury, and the amount of that remittance was but three thousand dollars. Having suffered mortification from the constant disregard to his remonstrances, and repeated disappointments of his expectations, he determined to indure them no longer, and resigned his commission to Mr. Morris in July, 1784.

General Whipple was appointed, in conformity to a resolve of congress, one of the commissioners to hear and settle the dispute long subsisting between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, relative to the Wyoming lands. They met in Trenton, New Jersey, in November, 1782. He was appointed president of the court, and during its long and arduous session, from the eighteenth of November, to the thirteenth of December, he conducted their proceedings with great dignity, decorum, and impartiality.

His health had suffered, and had become impaired in some degree by the fatigues he had endured, and the exertions he had made previously for promoting the public service of the country; but about the time when that court of commissioners met, he began to be afflicted with painful strictures across the chest. This infirmity rendered his situation not only painful, and at times extremely distressing, but very dangerous. By reason of it, he was almost precluded from necessary exercise; as even that which was moderate, produced violent palpitations, and riding on horseback sometimes caused him to faint and fall to the ground.

It was the custom at that period, when General Whipple retired from congress, for the courts in New Hampshire to be constituted of four judges; the chief justice only was a lawyer by profession, and the side judges were selected from among the civilians who were supposed to possess a sound judgment, a discerning mind, and integrity of principle; these, together with a good general education, were deemed adequate to qualify for a seat on the bench. Mr. Whipple was appointed a side judge of the superior court of New Hampshire, in 1782. In an effort which devolved on him, and which he undertook, of summing up the arguments of the counsel, stating the evidence and submitting the case to the jury, he brought on a violent palpitation, which so affected him, that he never after attempted a similar exercise while he remained a member of the court. He continued to ride the circuits two or three years.

In the autumn of 1785, the affection in his chest became



so distressing, that he left the circuit before he had completed it and returned to his home. He immediately retired to his chamber, which was the place of his confinement to the close of his life. The nature of his complaint prevented him from taking a recumbent posture. All the refreshment by sleep during his confinement, he received while sitting in an easy chair.

He gave direction some time before his decease, that after his death, an examination should be made, to ascertain the nature of his malady. He continued to endure an increasing distress, until the twenty-eighth day of November, 1785, when he expired in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

On an examination, it appeared that a part of his heart had become ossified. Thus terminated the life of a man, the commencement and early education of whom, presented no greater probability for rising to distinction and eminence, than thousands of others who are born and reared in this country. To him in the morning of life, no stronger motives for exertion, nor animating inducements to perseverance were furnished, than are placed in view of a large proportion of American youth. Yet, we have seen him rise from the station of a cabin-boy, to the command of a ship. Disembarking from thence, we have seen him with the feelings of ardent patriotism, acting at the same time in the character of a merchant and a politician; possessing the confidence of his fellow citizens, we have seen him promoted to high military office, and through successive gradations rising rapidly to a seat in the first legislative council in the nation, and then on the bench in the highest court of law in the state where he resided. All this was achieved by him, aided by a preparatory education more limited than is acquired by hundreds of youth in New England, from year to year. And all this was affected before he had reached fifty-five years of age.



### MATTHEW THORNTON.

MATTHEW THORNTON, was a native of Ireland. He was born in that island about the year 1744. His father, when he was about three years old, came with his family to America, and took up his first residence at Wiscasset in Maine. But

after a few years' residence there, he removed to Worcester, in Massachusetts; where he availed himself of an opportunity of giving his son an academical education. This he did preparatory to fitting him for one of the learned professions, which he designed he should pursue.

Having gone through his preparatory course, he selected the medical profession for the object of his pursuit, and commenced his professional studies under the instruction of Doctor Grout of Leicester, but a few miles from Worcester. Having passed through the usual course of preparation, according to the usage at that period, he began his professional career in Londonderry in New Hampshire. That town was originally settled by Irish emigrants: there, among his native countrymen, he was cordially welcomed with that warmth of national attachment, for which the Irish are distinguished, wherever they are assembled. His success in his practice was answerable to his wishes; for he soon established a reputation which gave him extensive employment, and after several years, comparative affluence.

Previous to the convulsions, a few years antecedent to the beginning of the revolutionary conflict, Doctor Thornton, with but one exception, spent his time in the regular pursuit of his professional business in Londonderry. He joined the expedition against Cape Breton, as surgeon to the troops employed in that successful enterprise. With this exception, no occurrence of his life is recorded, demanding a particular notice, during the intervening period, between 1745 and 1775. In the latter year, when the royal government was subverted, and dissolved in New Hampshire, and a provincial convention was formed, Matthew Thornton was appointed the first president. At that time he was in commission of the peace, having been appointed by Governor Benning Wentworth; and he held also the commission of a colonel, in the militia of New Hampshire. He was, however, an attentive observer of the political measures adopted by the British parliament, and their oppressive bearings upon the liberty, rights, and prosperity of the colonists. He was determined respecting the proper course to be pursued—that the oppressive system, begun and adhered to by parliament, notwithstanding petitions and remonstrances, must be met by the provincial inhabitants with an uniform, firm, and united opposition. In his intercourse with the people of New Hampshire, he was actively useful in exciting and directing their spirits, and thus preparing them to assume that position of

determined resistance, which would be indispensable for the maintenance of their civil rights and privileges, as subjects of the British empire, or as members of an independent government adopted by themselves. So popular had he become among the people of New Hampshire, that he was appointed president of the government formed in that province, on the abdication of Governor Wentworth, when he fled from apprehended danger to preserve his life, and thus he was placed in the station of chief magistrate of the colony. The convention was comprised of men not educated for political life, and for a term of six months only. Sensible that they were not well versed in the theory of government, and realizing their unorganized condition, they applied to the continental congress for counsel and advice how to proceed in that emergency. They adopted other wise and prudent measures, more immediately affecting the conduct of the inhabitants, during the interregnum, which were productive of happy results. Licentious meetings, and acts of insubordination and lawless violence, but too common when men are without an acknowledged legitimate government, were wholly avoided; and the public peace and tranquillity preserved, until a system of government was adopted, and put into operation, according to the recommendation of congress. In all these proceedings Doctor Thornton had a leading influence.

Soon after, their system of government was adopted, and a general assembly convened for legislative business. Doctor Thornton was chosen speaker of the house. This was in January, 1776. In September of the same year, he was appointed a delegate to the continental congress, for the term of one year. He took his seat in the ensuing November and was then admitted to sign his name to the Declaration of Independence; although the vote sanctioning the measure had been taken on the fourth day of July preceding. In this indulgence, however, he was not singular. Several other delegates were similarly situated by their not being present at the time when the question was settled in congress hall.

Previous to his first election to a seat in congress, so early as January, 1776, he was appointed a judge of the superior court of New Hampshire; and before that date, he had been elected a member of the court of common pleas. In December, 1776, he was again elected to congress for the term of one year, from the 23d of January, 1777. Having represented the state of New Hampshire during that term, he closed his labors in congress, and withdrew to his domestic resi-

dence. His office of judge in the superior court he retained until 1782.

In the latter part of 1779, he left his residence in Londonderry, and removed to Exeter. He there purchased a farm, and divided his time between agriculture and his official public employments. His farm was very pleasantly situated on the margin of the Merrimack River; where, in an attendance on his diversified employments, some of which, as pastimes, served the twofold purposes of recreation and amusement, he spent the latter years of his life in tranquillity. Being advanced in years, he principally relinquished the business of his medical profession, attending to its calls only when requested in cases of special urgency. He was once or twice elected a member of the general court, and served in that capacity; and was once chosen a senator in the state legislature.

His society was not only acceptable to, but courted by people of all ages and distinctions in society; and his own affections and friendships were warm, ardent, and sincere. Few men, in their intercourse with mankind, had more numerous friends, and still fewer greeted them with an attachment more pure or fervent.

He was a firm believer in the divine revelation, and a constant, and reverential attendant on the public institutions of the Christian religion, whenever he was not prevented by the necessary calls of his professional duties, or others which were indispensable.

After he had passed his eightieth year, he was attacked with the whooping-cough, and survived it several years, although it frequently affected his lungs with extreme violence.

In 1803, being then on a visit to his daughters, who were settled in Newburyport in Massachusetts, he was removed from the world by death, on the twenty-fourth day of June, in the 89th year of his age.

His children who survived him were two sons and two daughters.

**MASSACHUSETTS.****JOHN HANCOCK.**

THIS gentleman, who made a conspicuous figure in the period which preceded the revolutionary struggle, by which the American colonies were severed from the mother country, and whose name stands first on the list of signers of the Declaration of Independence—was born in the year 1737, near the village of Quincy, in the province of Massachusetts Bay. The spot on which his paternal residence stood, constitutes a part of the estate of the first President Adams.

Both his grandfather and his father were ministers of the gospel. The first settled and continued for near half a century in Lexington, the town celebrated for the scene of the first enterprise of the British troops, and the commencement of open hostilities with this country. His father, John Hancock, seems to have been a laborious, faithful, pious minister; a friend of learning, and a patron of the literary institutions of the province which gave him birth. His early decease, which occurred during the infancy of the subject of this memoir, left his son under the care of an uncle, who was an enterprising and successful merchant, and had risen to wealth and eminence among the merchants of New England. This affectionate relative took the charge of his nephew's education, and sent him to Harvard College, where he graduated in 1754, at the age of seventeen years. It is not known that he was distinguished among his contemporaries at college for any thing remarkable in his application to study, or in the brilliance of his genius.

Soon after he closed his collegiate life, his uncle entered him as a clerk in his own counting house, and during the period of three years, his attainments in the knowledge of his business were such, that in the year 1760, he sent him to England. During his residence there, the death of George II. and the accession of George III. occurred. He was present at the funeral of the former, and the coronation of the latter. Soon after his return from England, he was called to mourn the death of his kind and benevolent patron. This

event left him, at the age of twenty-seven years, in possession of one of the largest estates within the province of Massachusetts.

Having an ample provision for all his temporal wants thus secured to him, he seems to have relinquished all commercial enterprises, and to have early entered on a political career.

The first public office he sustained, was that of selectman or the town of Boston. This is a municipal office in every town in Massachusetts, and in several other states in New England. Mr. Hancock continued to perform its duties for a number of years.

In 1766, at the age of twenty-nine years, he was chosen a representative of Boston in the general assembly of the province, having for his colleagues, James Otis, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Cushing; all of them able men and ardent patriots, who exerted an extensive and salutary influence, directed by wisdom and sound discretion during the subsequent period of their political lives.

Seasons of much excitement, in which the feelings of a whole community are strongly interested, connected with or resulting from measures that bear upon the whole people of a state or nation, are known to afford opportunities for the display of talents in individuals, which, but for such seasons had never been made known to the public, perhaps even to the individuals themselves. Such was the era in which the subject of this memoir and his compatriots in Massachusetts were ushered upon the theatre of political life, in his native province. Perhaps he was more indebted for the rank he sustained among his fellows, to the times, than to any pre-eminent greatness of talents which he possessed. His talents were beyond all doubt respectable; and the emergencies of the time in which he was called to act, furnished the most powerful incentives and the most favorable opportunity for a brilliant display of them. His conduct through all his subsequent life, evinced that they were adequate to the occasions which called for their various exercise.

For some time antecedent to Mr. Hancock's entrance into public life, the measures of the British cabinet, relative to the American provinces, were of such a kind as justly to excite jealous apprehensions of their ultimate designs upon the chartered rights and liberties of the provinces. Such a jealousy, once excited, stimulated those who had the best opportunity to witness the course of events, to an untiring watchfulness of all their purposes, and to provide effectually against

every insidious encroachment upon their privileges. Mr. Hancock from his infancy, had imbibed an attachment to civil liberty. This attachment influenced and regulated his conduct to the termination of his life. He was placed in a situation where he had the best opportunities for detecting the machinations of the government of Great Britain relative to the provinces; and he, in connection with others, began early to concert measures, effectually to avert and frustrate their designs.

An occasion for making this manifest, was not long wanting. The British government undertook to impose duties on foreign merchandise imported into the colonies; and to inflict other injuries on their commerce, which impaired the colonial prosperity. These measures were very obnoxious to the people, being generally considered by them as an unjust encroachment upon their rights, and an unconstitutional infringement of their chartered privileges. They early determined not to submit to them, without resorting to all lawful measures of resistance.

Mr. Hancock was a member of the provincial assembly for the town of Boston, at the period when parliament adopted those obnoxious measures. To procure a revocation of them, he with a few others, formed associations to prevent the importation of British merchandise. They commenced a system of opposition to British oppression in Massachusetts, that was afterwards adopted in other colonies; and which led to the pursuit of measures, that contributed largely to the security of their liberty and independence, against all foreign encroachments in future. The feelings of the people being greatly excited, a predisposition to resist every aggression attempted by the English government and its agents, was every where excited, and was ready, at a moment's warning, to be brought into action when an occasion should be presented. Such an one soon appeared. It was said Mr. Hancock had a vessel loaded contrary to the revenue laws. This vessel was seized by the custom house officers, and placed for security, under the guns of an armed ship of the government. By this act, the people were so exasperated, that they assembled, and pursued and beat the officers with clubs; and drove them on board their vessel, or to a neighboring castle for security. They also burnt the collector's boat, and a mob rased to the ground the houses of some of the most obnoxious and active partizans of the collector.

The name of Hancock was only incidentally connected with

this transaction. He was already popular with the community; and from this incident that popularity was increased. He was young, of an ardent temperament, active in vindicating the rights of the people against attempts at usurpation; and above all, he was affluent and hospitable. It is not strange therefore, that he should, as he in fact did, become a favorite leader with the great body of the people.

This occurrence furnished a pretence, which the governor probably was glad to embrace, to justify himself for introducing several regiments of British troops into Boston. His ostensible plea was, that the measure was required for maintaining tranquillity in the town, for protecting the officers of the customs against similar violence in future, and to guard against civil commotions among the inhabitants. There was already, a hostile feeling existing between the people and soldiery. This measure of the governor served to increase and inflame it; and to nourish the seeds of insurrection which were even then germinating among the inhabitants. They regarded the armed soldiers as the instruments of a tyranny, to which they were determined never to submit. The soldiers despised the people, and the people abhorred the soldiers thus quartered among them. With these feelings and sentiments mutually indulged, it required only a slight cause to produce violent outrage. An occasion of this kind was not long delayed. On the 5th of March, 1770, as a small party of British soldiers were parading in King-street, an assemblage of the people collected near by, doubtless not influenced by the kindest feelings, but on the contrary, provoked by repeated insults which the soldiers had given them, assailed them with snow balls and such other missiles as were at hand. To repel this assault, the soldiers, by order of their officers, fired on their assailants; killed several and wounded more of the citizens. This event is stiled *the Massacre of Boston*. This occurrence, in which the first blood was shed since the commencement of their contentions, caused great excitement in the town; and although the mob gave the provocation, the inhabitants viewed it as an outrage which demanded the most signal revenge. The troops, anticipating the consequences of this rash action to themselves, withdrew to their rendezvous; and, by this measure, were saved from falling a sacrifice to the enraged populace: who flocked in from every part of the town, prepared to avenge, in a summary manner, the deaths of their fellow citizens.



The citizens who had for some time felt aggrieved by the introduction of the troops among them, seized on this, as a favorable occasion, to urge on the governor the necessity of having the soldiers immediately withdrawn from the town. The citizens were convened on the following day; and they appointed Mr. Hancock, and some others, to call on the governor, and request that he would direct their removal without delay. This was ultimately accomplished, though not without reluctance on the governor's part; nor until after a second deputation of the people. Mr. Hancock exerted a leading influence on this occasion. At a period of life comparatively early, he had acquired such a degree of confidence among the people, that he seems to have been constantly selected as a leader, to direct all measures which concerned the public welfare. The governors of the province successively, and the partizans of the administration, watched him with the closest attention. They discovered that his principles of government were opposed to their measures, that he was an able and vigilant sentinel, watching all their motions with a fixed determination to obstruct, and when practicable, to frustrate their obnoxious designs; and stedfastly to vindicate and uphold the just rights of his fellow subjects. The panders of power, and the royal sycophants, would gladly have induced him by intimidation or by flattery, to desist from the course he had adopted. Both of these methods were in succession tried upon him, but they were tried equally in vain. His integrity, though assailed by addresses to his fears, and to his ambition and vanity, was found by those who wished to detach him from the popular interest, too stern and inflexible. He was equally unmoved by a proffer of royal favors on the one hand, if he complied; and on the other, with the threatened vengeance of his sovereign, if he persisted. These facts being evinced, he became highly exalted in the public esteem; and proportionately obnoxious to the officers of government.

On one of the annual returns of the 5th of March the day of *the Boston Massacre*, he was selected by the citizens, to deliver an oration commemorative of that event. This he did in such a manner, as gave great satisfaction to the people; but caused strong feelings of umbrage in the partizans of the government. It is a favorable specimen of popular eloquence, and exhibited him, as a man well fitted for a popular leader; better adapted however, to raise and keep alive a feeling of excitement in the populace, than wisely to

regulate and guide its efforts to beneficial results. Happy for the country, in the most important interests of which he was destined to become a conspicuous actor, he was associated with others whose patriotism was as pure, whose wisdom was more matured, whose discretion, as sound, and whose zeal, though less ardent than his, was nevertheless as persevering; and whose integrity was equally secure against the corrupting influence of honorary or pecuniary temptations.

Having been early elected by his fellow citizens, a member of the provincial assembly, he was soon chosen their speaker. This choice did not receive the approbation of the governor. In 1767, he was chosen a member of the executive council. This also was displeasing to the governor; and he was consequently rejected by his authority, in the same honorable manner. This was not done in a solitary instance merely. It had been repeated several years successively which had the effect to increase his popularity with the citizens, and seemed to have become necessary to his fame. It was, however, suspended by the governor, without any ostensible reason assigned for the change of conduct on his part; and he gave his sanction to the nomination of Mr. Hancock to the council.

Previous to this, some persons, influenced perhaps by envy, had entertained a suspicion of his integrity. This had been put into circulation with a cautious industry; and had the effect of lowering the public confidence in his sincerity. This change of conduct in the governor, from open opposition, to favor equally open, was considered as evidence which justified their jealousy, and strengthened, if it did not confirm their belief of a depravation of principle on his part. To counteract and eradicate their jealousy, and the effect in their minds, of art, and of unsought civilities of the governor, he refused to take his seat at the council board; and at no very distant period, pronounced his oration, in commemoration of "the massacre" above mentioned. By these measures, he successfully refuted the insidious suggestions of his rivals; triumphed over his enemies, retrieved his waning popularity, and resumed with increased favor his standing in the public estimation. Nor was this the only immediate effect which this line of his conduct produced. It reconciled those whose former attachment had become cooled for a season. He was restored to their confidence; and in the same proportion, his magnanimous display of firmness and integrity

incurred the vengeance of the British government. A man so influential as Mr. Hancock, the ministry would gladly, by the use of any means in their power, have secured in their favor. Intimidation and corruption they had tried; and tried in vain.

Their only remaining resource for destroying his influence, which was likely to oppose them in all their measures for oppressing the colonists, was to put him out of the way: the attempt to accomplish this was made at a subsequent period; when he, with his untiring friend and colleague, Samuel Adams, was excepted, from the clemency of his majesty, in the proclamation issued by the governor, after the battle at Lexington; in which he offered pardon to all whose penitence evinced their submission—except the notorious offenders, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. These had been too guilty to escape punishment; and were consequently excepted, and held in reserve, when secured, to sate the vengeance of the government.

He had, for some time, commanded, with the rank of a captain, the cadet company, which was the governor's guard. Governor Gage removed him from that office. The company, in resentment, returned the standard which they received on the governor's accession to this office, and disbanded themselves. What gave a signal importance to this measure of the governor, was the fact that the company consisted of some of the most respectable inhabitants of Boston.

Governor Barnard was peculiarly obnoxious to Mr. Hancock. In 1767, he complimented him with a lieutenant's commission. This commission Mr. Hancock tore in pieces in presence of many citizens. By this act, he gave offence to royal dignity, and received the reprehension and threats of the governor. He was, subsequently, chosen captain, with the rank of a colonel. This took place a short time after Governor Barnard had taken his departure. During a period of several years, immediately preceding the battle of Lexington, which was the commencement of open hostilities in the revolutionary war, the conduct of Messrs. Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, had been attentively watched by the existing government. Their influence on the people was strongly deprecated by the governor and his partisans. Various attempts were made, but without success, to detach them from the cause of the people, which they had espoused, and boldly manifested on various occasions. As *these* several attempts proved unsuccessful—as they would

neither be frightened, nor allured, into a compliance with the governor's wishes, it was deemed an object of no small importance to get possession of their persons, that they might be held in safe custody, to prevent further injury, and that they might be brought forth to answer for their treasonable practices. Their consciousness of this fact brought them much together.

The night preceding the Lexington battle, these two gentlemen lodged together in that village. To secure their persons, is supposed to have been one motive for the expedition, which resulted in that sanguinary conflict.

They narrowly escaped being captured. For as the party detached for securing them, entered the house in which they lodged, by one avenue, they retired through another, and thus eluded their pursuers, at the moment when they believed they had secured their victims. The governor, mortified and incensed by his failure, issued his proclamation, by the terms of which, they were cut off from all hope of clemency, even should they voluntarily surrender themselves. This exclusion was viewed by their fellow citizens, as an honorable distinction in their favor; since it clearly indicated the degree of importance, which the enemies of their liberty attached to their characters and influence. In proportion as they were feared and proscribed by the governor and his adherents, they were exalted and confirmed in the esteem and affections of the people.

The provincial congress of Massachusetts, in October 1774, unanimously elected Hancock their president. In the following year he was chosen president of the continental congress. The office was the most honorable distinction his country could confer on him. He was peculiarly qualified to discharge its arduous duties, with benefit to the country, and honor to himself, by his previous experience as a presiding officer, in various deliberative assemblies, in his native state; and by reason of a dignity of manners, always desirable in such an office, and which he possessed in a pre-eminent degree. This distinguished office he held on the ever memorable fourth of July, 1776; and hence his signature stands foremost on the Declaration of Independence of the United States of North America. It may be added in this place, that the most important document, in which every American citizen feels the most lively interest, when first published, went abroad to the world, with the name of John Han-

cock only subscribed to it. This fact, though the result of his official station, gave signal importance to the man, in the public estimation for a season; and served, in no inconsiderable degree, to enhance his fame.

He entered on the discharge of the arduous, and somewhat embarrassing duties of his office, with a becoming modesty, highly proper in itself, and becoming in him, in the presence of a number of distinguished men, his seniors in age and experience. Those duties he performed with such an appropriate wisdom, and such a display of personal dignity, as demanded and received the approbation even of his enemies.

In 1777, he resigned the office of president of congress, and retired to his native residence. He was induced to take this measure, by long continued application to the arduous duties which had devolved on him, and by the increasing ravages of the gout, by which his health was considerably impaired. In this retirement to domestic life, the esteem and applause of his countrymen followed him; which they especially evinced by public and splendid demonstrations.

But he was not suffered long to enjoy the tranquil pleasures of domestic retirement, for he was elected a member of the convention which was appointed about this time, to form a constitution of government for the commonwealth of Massachusetts. Inaction has few attractions for a man who has been used to an active life. Such a man was Hancock. As might have been anticipated from a knowledge of his established character, he was very assiduous and faithful in the discharge of those public duties which that important station devolved on him,

After the constitution was adopted by the people of that state, Hancock had the honor conferred on him, of being chosen the first governor of that commonwealth, and was the first man ever preferred to that station, who derived his authority from the voluntary suffrages of a free people. To that office he was annually chosen, five years successively. And after two years, during which, the office was conferred upon the honorable James Bowdoin, he was again elected, and by annual reappointment, held the office to the close of his life.

It is well known that the period intervening between the termination of the revolutionary war, and the adoption of the federal constitution of government, was a season of great agitation and solicitude, throughout the country. During the struggle for securing the national independence, a feeling of

common interest, and a sense of common danger, influenced the states, under the old confederation, to act in concert. And this, in the existing state of the country, was found adequate to the great purposes for which it was formed. But after the war was terminated, and the people had time to attend to their own immediate concerns, experience soon taught them that there was a deficiency in the general government, which rendered it unfit to answer the necessities of a nation, comprised, as this was, of a number of independent sovereignties. Conflicting interests of different states were found to operate injuriously on those of individuals, in their commercial transactions. One state, as a sovereign power, claimed a right to exact an impost duty on the citizens of another. This, as was natural, excited a disposition to retaliate. The people were impoverished by the expenses of the war. Many were in debt. Creditors resorted to legal measures to enforce a collection of their demands, which involved many families in deep embarrassment. Taxes for the support of government, though indispensable, by many were deemed exorbitant; and their collection resisted. Owing to these and other causes, a spirit of disaffection to government prevailed extensively in New England: and in Massachusetts, it at length broke out in an open insurrection. Wise reflecting men perceived the necessity of a remedy for these evils. This was eventually sought and obtained in the formation, adoption, and successful operation of the federal constitution of government, under which we now live.

During this period, almost a period of anarchy, Mr. Hancock was called to administer the government of Massachusetts. The difficulties which he had to encounter were many and perplexing. With the aid of his compatriots he was enabled to surmount them. Insurrection was subdued; and gradually the agitation of the public feeling settled into a state of tranquillity, worthy of a people, who, under difficulties and burdens almost unparalleled, had achieved their independence. He was not exempted, however, from imputations of being actuated by sinister motives, unworthy at all times of distinguished public characters. And, in this respect, he was not singular. For no purity of character—no professions of disinterested intentions—no line of conduct, corresponding with such professions, during a long life, actively devoted to his fellow men, could secure the great Washington from similar aspersions, generated by envy in the breasts of those who uttered them.

Mr. Hancock was chosen a member of the Massachusetts convention, for discussing the great question of adopting or rejecting the federal constitution. In that body, the constitution met with many opposers. It was believed that these constituted a majority of the members. Probably owing to the impression which prevailed, that he disapproved of it, he was chosen president of the convention. But sickness prevented him from taking his seat, till the last week of their session. He then attended, and voted in favor of its adoption. Its adoption by Massachusetts, about which, many fears were entertained in other states, was probably effected, in a great measure, by his influence, activity, and personal efforts to obviate the objections of many opposing members. But for his exertions in its favor, there is a strong probability that the constitution would have been rejected by that commonwealth.

After the general government was organized, and had gone into operation, in a suit against that state, before the court of the United States, he was summoned, as governor, to answer the prosecution. He resisted the process, on the ground, that an independent sovereign state could not be arraigned before a civil court to be tried. In this resistance he was successful. And a recurrence of such an event was prevented by an amendment of the federal constitution. By this act, which was one of the last of his eventful life, he probably introduced a barrier against many controversies, which would otherwise have ensued, and have disturbed the public harmony with acrimonious contentions.

About twenty years before his death, he married a Miss Quincy, a native of Boston, and a member of one of the most ancient, and distinguished families of New England. His only son dying in his youth, he was left without a child to perpetuate his name, or to inherit his fortune.

That Hancock was a popular leader in his native commonwealth, is admitted by friends and foes. No rival competition for office could run successively against him. That he was fond of popular favor cannot be denied; but he sustained the imputation of having sought it at times, by methods not wholly commendable. That he was well fitted for the times in which he lived, and for the theatre on which he acted a most conspicuous part, will now be acknowledged by all who are acquainted with the history of his life—and that he was a benefactor to his country, will not be called in question by posterity

## JOHN ADAMS.



This gentleman, who was destined, in the course of Providence, to act a conspicuous part in events which led to, and introduced the revolutionary struggle between Great Britain and her American colonies, and to become a leader of distinguished eminence in the civil concerns connected with that great event, was born at Quincy in Massachusetts, a short distance from Boston, on the nineteenth day of October, (O. S.) 1735. He was a lineal descendent, in the fourth generation, from Henry Adams, who fled from persecution in England; and, maternally, from John Alden, who was one of the Pilgrims who landed on the Plymouth-rock, and sought, with that worthy band of pious adventurers, an asylum for civil and religious liberty, which was denied them in their native country. The first settlers of this country, having been long refused the enjoyment of their natural rights "at home," (as it was then called,) had, before they embarked, acquired a clear and definite understanding of what constituted those rights. This knowledge, they not only brought with them into this their new country, but carefully instilled it into the minds of their posterity. They came well prepared to claim and establish a full enjoyment of their civil and religious rights for themselves, and to ensure their transmission, secure and unimpaired, to future generations. No class of men probably ever lived, who more carefully instilled their own principles into the minds of their children, than the New England Pilgrims; nor was there ever a class of men who more faithfully performed the duty of instructors, in this respect, than they. They clearly foresaw that their immunities, however securely guarded by royal charters, might have to encounter attempts to wrest them from the possession of their descendants, by governors and other representatives of regal power. They therefore took much pains to provide that all children should have the means of education within their reach, that they might grow up with a correct understanding of their rights, from childhood, and be prepared to defend them by truth and sound argument, against all the arts of cunning and ingenious sophists.

In this school John Adams was born. He began to receive its instructions at the earliest dawn of his intellectual



perception ; and he was introduced to the political stage as a prominent actor, at that period of his country's history, when all his powers were necessary to vindicate his own and his country's rights, against the unjust claims of the British ministry, and to rescue them from their grasp, that they might be preserved inviolate to posterity. To prepare him for entering college, his father placed him under the tuition of a competent instructor in Braintree. After completing his preparatory course, he was admitted a member of Harvard College, at Cambridge, in 1751, where he graduated at the end of four years. His collegiate life, as far as is known, was not marked by any thing very distinguishing. But for this deficiency, the after years of his life abundantly compensated.

Having resolved to engage in the profession of law, soon after leaving college he repaired to Worcester, and placed himself under the instruction of an eminent barrister, of the name of Putnam. At that early period of the history of America, the opportunities for acquiring education in this country were very limited, compared with the present. Few extensive libraries were possessed by individuals, even among professional men. But in the office of Mr. Putnam, Mr. Adams found as good advantages as could readily be obtained at that period, which he improved with great industry, although he was engaged in instructing a grammar school at the same time. It was long customary for young gentlemen in New England, to pursue such an employment, that they might, in a course of useful labors for the benefit of others, support themselves during their professional studies.

His connection with Mr. Putnam was the means of introducing him to acquaintances, who were of much value to him during his preparatory studies. Among them was the attorney general of the province, Jeremy Gridley, Esq. Their first interview, which was effected by the kind offices of his instructor, was the commencement of a mutual friendship, which proved highly beneficial to Adams. In a manner indicative of peculiar affection, Mr. Gridley led his friend into a private room, as if to communicate a confidential secret ; in which apartment was a book-case, containing treatises on civil law—works rarely to be met with in New England at that time. While Adams was anxiously expecting the disclosure of some important communication, pointing to the book-case, Mr. Gridley addressed him thus : "There is the secret of my eminence, of which you may avail yourself, if you please." **By faithfully and perseveringly improving those means, which**

this act of special friendship put at his command, he soon became distinguished by his familiar acquaintance with a branch of science but little known, at that time, by either judges or practitioners. This enabled him to begin his professional career with peculiar advantages, not possessed by his contemporaries. A mine of rich treasure was thus thrown open to him, from which his competitors were wholly excluded.

There are documents still preserved, which clearly demonstrate that Mr. Adams very early began to turn his mind to a contemplation of the general politics of his country. A letter, written by him in 1755, when he was but twenty years of age, gives a specimen of his views and his manner of reflecting on this subject, at that early period. This letter is a document of so remarkable a character, that it has been deemed worthy of preservation. It discloses great strength of mind; and exhibits a comprehensive range of speculation, and an extensive forecast, which must be admitted to be remarkable for such a youth, in any country. Its length precludes its insertion in this brief sketch.

Mr. Adams was admitted to the bar in 1758, and settled with the intention of practising law, in Braintree.

During several years, prior to the stamp act and other measures of the British parliament, which were peculiarly obnoxious to the feelings, and injurious to the commercial prosperity of the colonists, there had existed a rooted bitterness between the people in Boston, engaged in foreign trade, and the officers of the customs. Those officers, to some degree odious in every community, by the measures they adopted to strengthen their powers and legalize their arbitrary acts, became very obnoxious to the inhabitants. The former were actuated by a desire to render themselves popular with the ministry, that they might possess the means and opportunity to amass property. The latter, by a jealous guardianship of their own liberties, and an unbending determination to resist and combat every attempted encroachment upon them, destroyed all harmony, and established mutually a fixed aversion, that widened the breach continually. At this early date, though not openly active, Mr. Adams espoused the cause of the citizens in the most decided manner. He steadily but cautiously watched the progress of events abroad; and, in his private study, made himself minutely acquainted with the law and justice appertaining to both sides of the controversy. As, therefore, he increased in years, he advanced in qualifications to assume and maintain the impor

tant station he held in the revolutionary struggle which ensued.

He was admitted to the rank of a barrister in 1761. As his professional business increased, favorable opportunities were successively given him for exhibiting his talents to the public, and for attracting their attention; and, on these occasions, public approbation was liberally awarded to him. He was neither an indifferent, nor an inactive spectator of the interesting events that occurred, affecting in an alarming manner, the rights and liberties of the colonists; and especially those of his native province. This enabled him, even at the commencement of his career, to exhibit a mind well informed on every subject presented for discussion, upon principles purely republican; and with an integrity that pursued an undeviating course, uninfluenced by bribery, flattery, or threats, though all these were successively attempted.

The first instance of material importance, in which Mr. Adams appeared publicly to advocate the cause of his country, and to defend her against the arbitrary proceedings of the parliament, was in 1765, on its being made known that the celebrated stamp act had passed into a law, and to be enforced in the colonies. It was on this occasion, that he wrote and published his "Essay on the Canon and Feudal Law;" an elaborate and bold appeal to the people. This publication presented him before the community, in a manner peculiarly favorable for his future promotion. Indeed, it ushered him rapidly into public notice; insomuch that though young, he was the same year associated with the distinguished James Otis and some others, possessed of congenial feelings, to demand, in presence of the governor and council, that the courts should dispense with the use of stamped paper in their administration of justice. From this moment, he was always prompt to step forward and act in unison with the leading master spirits of that town and vicinity, in all their efforts to obstruct, and effectually counteract the schemes of the ministry.

In 1766, he removed from Braintree and settled in Boston. A short time before his removal, he was married to Miss Abigail Smith, daughter of a respectable clergyman of that name, with whom he lived more than half a century.

After the military had been stationed in the town of Boston, among the citizens, on the pretended ground that their aid was requisite to enable the officers of the customs to execute the duties of their office; considering it a violation

of the citizens' rights, and a gross calumny upon their character, he united with Otis, Hancock, S. Adams and others, in opposition to the governor and his satellites, and with them perseveringly prosecuted measures for effecting their removal from town. In these efforts he manifested such decided talents, that Governor Barnard judged it expedient to try to detach him from his associates, and secure his aid on the side of government. Accordingly, he authorized Mr. Sewall, the attorney general, and Adams's personal friend, to offer him the lucrative office of advocate general in the court of admiralty. But it was promptly rejected. He magnanimously chose rather to expose himself to dangers and suffer affliction with his fellow citizens and republican brethren, than to sacrifice his integrity for the reward of a lucrative office. The office, which was one that would have placed him in the line of promotion, yielded a handsome income; and withal, required no ostensible abandonment of his principles or friends. Yet, knowing that all of these would be expected of him, of which his acceptance of the offer would be considered as a virtual pledge, he viewed it as an insidious attempt upon his principles, and he peremptorily declined to accept the appointment.

It will be recollected, that all the efforts of the people of Boston to effect the removal of the military from the town, proved unsuccessful, until after that affray, in which the soldiers fired on a collection of the citizens, and killed several in 1770, called *the Boston Massacre*.

After some delay, those who were supposed the guilty ones, were arrested and tried by a civil court. Mr. Adams was applied to, to undertake their defence as their counsellor and advocate in the court. This was a trying situation, and especially in such circumstances. He had been one of the foremost of the citizens in seeking to have the soldiers removed to their barracks; he had united with the militia as a private, in mounting guard and patrolling the streets by night and day for the common safety of the inhabitants; he was a man of the people, he lived among and for the people; and depended on their favor for his professional prosperity; yet he was now called on to defend the cause of men, who were not only obnoxious to the citizens, but who had killed, as they thought wantonly, several of their friends and townsmen. In this trying situation, he adopted a manly and independent course. He did what his friends applauded him for doing, at no small hazard of losing the favor and esteem of his

neighbors and friends; he appeared as their advocate, and conducted their defence in such a manner as merited and received the universal applause of the community. The pledge which he had given of his integrity, in refusing the office proffered him two years before, secured him against any suspicion of sacrificing his principles on that occasion. That he lost no favor among his fellow citizens, is evinced by their choosing him their representative that same year, in place of Mr. Bowdoin, who then took a seat in the council. It required, however, no small share of moral courage, under such circumstances, to take the stand which he did. And his election to the legislature, so soon after the trial, was no equivocal evidence of their undiminished confidence in his integrity.

In all the controversies between the royal governors on the one side, and the colonists on the other (and these were numerous and perplexing during the few years immediately preceding the open rupture that followed,) Mr. Adams always stood forward in defence of their chartered rights; and whether he was a member of the house of assembly or not, his talents were always put in requisition connected with the other leading patriots of that age, and always exerted with such effect, as to baffle, if they did not wholly subvert, the machinations of the advocates of ministerial supremacy. Having refused to be bought over, he became peculiarly odious to the two governors, Barnard and Hutchinson; inso-much, that when, by the votes of his constituents, he was placed on the list of counsellors, Governor Hutchinson erased his name; and thus in the exercise of a right which he held, but which was never exercised except for the indulgence of vindictive feelings or personal hostility, he excluded him from his seat. Such treatment was not calculated to conciliate, but had a tendency to widen the breach already existing.

Governor Gage succeeding Hutchinson, brought with him similar feelings towards Mr. Adams, which his predecessor had indulged. He made this manifest not long after his arrival, for the people having again placed his name on the list of counsellors, Governor Gage following Hutchinson's example, erased it. The first assembly under Governor Gage's administration, was convened in Salem. It was in this assembly, of which Adams was a member, that the proposal for calling a continental congress to deliberate concerning the general interests of the colonies was proposed and adopted, in spite of the governor's opposition. On that occasion,

five delegates were elected. They were J. and S. Adams Paine, Cushing, and Bowdoin.

This was a bold measure, and considered as audacious by some judicious men, who were particular friends of John Adams. Mr. Sewall, in particular, tried to dissuade him from engaging in an enterprise fraught with so much danger. It was on this occasion, after having listened to his friendly admonitions and advice, that Adams made that memorable reply, which has been considered as peculiarly characteristic—that sink or swim, live or die, to survive or perish with his country, was his unalterable determination. As to his fate, the die was cast; he had passed the Rubicon.

By his election to the first meeting of delegates of the first continental congress, he was called to act in a new, difficult, and highly responsible station. The views and sentiments of the delegates from the different colonies were very dissimilar, respecting the important subjects that were to be discussed in that assembly. But even in this situation, he soon showed that he was adequate to a faithful discharge of the momentous duties that had been entrusted to him by his country.

Being fully convinced with his friend, Joseph Hawley, of Northampton, even at that early period, that all conciliatory measures on the part of the colonists would prove unavailing, and that “they must fight after all,” he felt it to be necessary to rouse the feelings of the delegates from other colonies, to realize, more clearly and more correctly than they did, the true situation of their country. This he saw was indispensable, that they might be prepared for that distressing crisis of their political affairs, which it was obvious was approaching; and which he even then, with a few others, believed was unavoidable. In his views, he had the satisfaction to find some highly influential gentlemen from the southward entirely concur. Particularly the celebrated Patrick Henry, of Virginia, and Thomas M’Kean, of Pennsylvania.

The measure adopted by congress in this their first session though necessary to unite the public sentiment, and elevate the public feeling of opposition to the persevering despotism of the British cabinet, proving ineffectual, as he had predicted, it was soon found necessary for congress to hold another session. To this he was elected, in connection with all of his former colleagues, except Mr. Bowdoin, who, being about to sail for Europe, was omitted, and John Hancock appointed in his stead.

The second congress convened in Philadelphia in May, 1775. As the British had actually commenced hostilities previous to this meeting of congress, in their attack on Lexington and Concord, in Massachusetts, it became necessary to make preparation to raise a military force, and to organize an army for the defence of the country. As articles of agreement had been settled, and signed by congress, according to which the first aggression of the British on the people of Massachusetts, became the common cause of all the colonies, it became the duty of congress to direct in all things appertaining to the defence of the country, and the prosecution of the war, already begun. Hence a commander in chief was to be appointed by the congress now in session. John Adams of Massachusetts, nominated George Washington of Virginia, to the chief command of the armies of the United States. This nomination, in which Adams was one of the prime movers, was preconcerted by him and his associates, with such secrecy and promptitude, that though Washington was a member of the body, he was wholly unapprized of the design, until he heard his name announced for that appointment. Sitting in his seat, Adams nominated him; advocated his appointment; and had the high satisfaction of seeing his nomination confirmed by the house. Had this been the only public act of his whole life, his country would have abundant cause for gratitude to John Adams, as having been their benefactor. His talents had been industriously exerted, after he first conceived the project, for some days before he announced it, to secure a majority in the house to sanction his motion. This was effected, though not without difficulty. But after the nomination had been postponed one day, it received the unanimous approbation of congress. This fact shows the ascendancy of his talents and influence, even at that early date, among his fellow patriots, who had the best means and opportunity for forming a correct estimate of his character.

On the sixth of May, 1776, he introduced a motion to congress, almost equivalent to a Declaration of Independence, and which directly led to it—*that the colonies should form governments, independent of the crown.*

Having long been convinced that congress must soon issue such a declaration, he laboured assiduously, in conjunction with others, who he knew agreed with him in sentiment, to prepare the way for it, by bringing the delegates from other colonies to feel the necessity and propriety of the measure, in order to ~~secure the independence of their rights against~~

their invading enemy. When this preparation was effected, and the motion was introduced by Mr. Lee, of Virginia, Mr. Adams became its warm and decided advocate, until it was adopted by a vote of congress.

He was appointed one of the committee for preparing a draft of a Declaration of Independence, associated with Jefferson and Franklin, and others ; and taking into consideration his efforts, from the time when he became convinced of its necessity, to the period of its consummation, which probably included not less than three years, it is believed that we shall not exceed the limits of truth when we say, that John Adams, of Massachusetts, was the most efficient agent in procuring a public Declaration of Independence of the United States of North America, of all those who were concerned in that memorable achievement. His exertions were not restricted to the limits of his own state, nor confined within the hall of congress. Some states were tardy in expressing their approbation of such a measure ; particularly Pennsylvania and Maryland. It was important to have a public avowal of their approbation, before congress came to a final result. This was accomplished by his friends Chase and Rush, in their respective states, aided by his counsel and influence, in due season for taking the final vote in congress.

In addition to the unremitting labors of Mr. Adams in congress, during a visit he made to his family, soon after the decision of the great question of independence, the legislature of Massachusetts elected him a member of their council. They also appointed him chief justice of their highest courts. He however declined this office ; but took his seat in the council, and assisted in their deliberations. He chose to adhere to the national government, to the establishment of which he had contributed so much ; although, by acting in the capacity of judge in his native state, he might have enjoyed the pleasures of domestic life in a much greater degree, than his continuance in congress would permit.

When Lord Howe arrived in this country, and made known that he was commissioned to confer with such persons as congress would designate, on the means of an accommodation with Great Britain, although Mr. Adams disapproved of even considering the proposition, yet it was assented to, and he was appointed one of the committee to treat with his lordship. They met at the British head quarters on Staten Island, and held an interview ; but, according to his prediction, it proved entirely abortive.



To give some idea of his immense labors, the following summary may suffice. He was a member of ninety different committees, during the remainder of 1776, and 1777. He was chairman of twenty-five. Some of these incurred great responsibility, and required incessant labors. The important duties thus imposed on him, he continued to discharge with fidelity and assiduity till December, 1777—when he was appointed a commissioner to France. This appointment he accepted; and embarked on his mission, in the frigate Boston, in the month of February, 1778. It was on this voyage that he evinced his courage as well as his patriotism, in a personal engagement with the enemy of his country. Captain Tucker, of the Boston, having discovered an English ship, with the consent of Mr. Adams gave chase to her; and, coming up with, engaged her. He had stipulated, as a condition of attacking the ship, that Mr. Adams should keep below, out of danger. But he soon saw him with his musket, among the mariners on deck, personally engaged in the conflict.

As the immediate object of this mission to France had been accomplished by Doctor Franklin, previous to his arrival in that kingdom; Mr. Adams, having but little public business requiring his attention, with the consent of congress, returned home, in the summer of 1779.

He was immediately requested to assist in forming a constitution of government for his native state; and was one of the committee for presenting a plan for the consideration of the convention. While he was engaged in this service for his native commonwealth, he was appointed by congress a minister to Great Britain, to negotiate a treaty of peace, and a treaty of commerce with that government.

For this voyage the French minister to the United States offered him a passage in the frigate *La Sensible*, which was accepted. He, with the secretary of legation, accordingly embarked in her at Boston, in October, 1779, and arrived at Ferrol, in Spain, after a long passage; and journeyed by land from thence to Paris. In a short time after his arrival, he became satisfied that England had no serious thoughts of concluding a peace with America—that she was not yet prepared to adopt the first preliminary, an acknowledgment of American Independence, the *sine qua non* with the United States; and having little business of a public nature to require his attention, he was desirous of returning home; but congress sent him a mission to Holland, to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with the states general. In this mis

tion congress also entrusted to his agency, other interests of signal importance in relation to their contest with England.

To show the confidence reposed in him by congress, the following statement will be sufficient; and at the same time, it will prove that this confidence was almost unlimited. While he was in Holland, congress sent him credentials, in addition to those he took with him from home, which constituted him, at one period, minister plenipotentiary for making peace; the same for making a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, the same to their high mightinesses, the states general; the same to the Prince of Orange and Stadtholder; the same for pledging the faith of the United States, as a party to the armed neutrality; and a commissioner of the United States for negotiating for a loan of ten million of dollars, for their benefit. Perhaps no public agent was ever entrusted by his government with so many important national interests, at the same time, as Mr. Adams was by congress.

The Count de Vergennes, the prime minister of France, an able but wily politician, had long been making his calculations for the preliminaries of a peace between England and the United States. His leading object was, to form the treaty in such a manner, that the United States should, with a nominal independence as a nation, be, to a considerable degree, dependent on France. It was within the plan of this minister, to have Mr. Adams act according to his counsel, and thus become a subordinate agent of France; which calculated in the negotiation for peace, so to direct the business, as in the result, to give to France a large share of the commercial advantages the United States might have it in their power to bestow. He wished also, that the United States might not be admitted to the fisheries—the right to which, it was his object to secure to France. Against all his art, and influence, Mr. Adams had to watch, and to guard himself against being improperly swayed by the general feeling of gratitude to France for aiding his country, in their arduous struggle; which feeling, though well grounded, was unduly indulged, even by some members of congress. He saw the delicacy of his situation, and the danger to which he was exposed, of being instrumental in sacrificing important interests of his country. But he resolved to act according to the true import of his commission, as a minister plenipotentiary, instead of receiving his instructions from the French cabinet. And it was owing to his discernment, and his resolution to act in that character, together with the firmness and patriotism of

Mr. Jay, that the privileges in the cod fishery, which the United States now enjoy, were secured to them in the treaty of peace with Great Britain. To the same united causes are we also indebted for the establishment of the Mississippi as the western boundary, and for preservation from an obligation to indemnify the tories, for the losses which they sustained by opposing the independence of their country.

In his agency, when he was attempting to negotiate a loan of several millions in Holland, for the United States, in order that he might succeed, he had to encounter and overcome numerous and powerful obstacles. He was almost unknown in Europe. He had to deal with a prudent and cautious people. They knew little of the country he represented, except that it was poor at that time, and had but limited resources; that many doubted whether the confederation could be sustained after peace, even if they established their independence; and that for establishing this, they were still contending with their powerful adversary. Should they loan their money under these circumstances, they justly anticipated much danger that it would not be repaid. Yet notwithstanding all these difficulties, he finally succeeded in his object; and in a short time after, he also concluded a treaty of amity and commerce with the Dutch government, by which the commerce of the United States was placed on the footing of that of the most favored nations.

This he accomplished, not by the friendly aid of the Count de Vergennes—not with the collateral assistance of able colleagues, but by the force of his own powerful and sagacious mind.

Having accomplished these two most important objects, and signed the treaty of peace with Great Britain; Mr. Adams remained during a part of 1784 in Holland. But having been appointed at the head of a commission by congress, consisting of himself, Franklin, and Jefferson, to negotiate treaties of commerce with any foreign nations which might be disposed to form commercial relations with the United States, he returned to France, and took up his residence in the vicinity of Paris.

Early in the year 1785, congress appointed him minister plenipotentiary, to represent the United States at the court of St. James. The situation in which his acceptance of that appointment placed him, was novel, and for various reasons, peculiarly trying to his feelings, and difficult to sustain

with that propriety and dignity which the rules of established etiquette required. Yet he acquitted himself in a manner acceptable both to the government which he represented, and that to which he was deputed. A lively and interesting account of his presentation to his majesty of Great Britain, was given by himself in a letter to Mr. Jay, then secretary of foreign relations, written by him in conformity to his instructions.

It was while he resided in his public character, that he wrote his elaborate defence of the American constitutions.

After an absence of more than eight years, he asked and obtained permission to return to the United States. This event took place greatly to the satisfaction of himself and his family, in 1788. In the autumn of that year, he was elected vice president of the United States, and took his seat as president of the senate, in the first congress under the federal constitution, on the 4th day of March following, when the new constitution went into operation. He was then, by the voice of his fellow citizens placed in office next to "him, who was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." This was a voluntary expression of their esteem and gratitude to him for so many years of his life devoted to their service.

In 1792, he was re-elected to the same office with entire unanimity. During this period, until Washington's retirement at the close of his second presidential term, Mr. Adams enjoyed more tranquillity than in any other period of his life, of equal duration, until after his retirement from office. It is well known that the four years of his presidency were among the most threatening to the peace and prosperity of the United States, of any during the French revolution.

When the French revolution commenced, the people of the United States were universally predisposed in its favor. Having but a very imperfect knowledge of the national character, political, civil, or religious, of France, there were some facts existing, which caused a deep interest in their favor among the people of this country. France had aided us in effecting the establishment of our independence. This excited gratitude. The people of France were ruled by a monarchy. With a kingly government our countrymen associated the idea of tyranny or despotism. From such a government we had but recently been liberated; and for this liberation, the people gratefully acknowledged their obligation to the French. We had established a republican con-

stitution of government. The French nation, having destroyed their monarchy, established ostensibly a republican government also. The friend of our nation, General Lafayette, had taken an efficient part in their revolution, and contributed much to the favorable sentiments of the people of the United States, which were indulged, even enthusiastically, in behalf of their revolution. They were too remote from the theatre, to realize the enormities which were exhibited; and to a great extent, too strongly biassed in their favor, to admit the full force of evidence which was derogatory to their friends and benefactors when it was placed fully before them.

Those who opposed the violence of the French, or denounced their unprincipled enormities, were stigmatized as monarchists and British agents. On the other hand, those who adhered to the French cause; or, who did not denounce them openly, were stiled jacobins and French partizans, who were ready to sacrifice the liberty of their own country to French rapacity. General Washington was looked to as the head of the former; and Mr. Jefferson, as head and chief counsellor of the latter party.

Thus, the people of the United States were divided into two great parties. Each party had selected its candidate to succeed Washington, who had announced his determination to retire from public life. An arduous struggle resulted in the election of Adams, by a small majority of votes over Jefferson, his popular competitor, who then succeeded him as vice president. The influence of the French rulers, which Jefferson was believed decidedly to favor, had been openly exerted by their minister in the United States to favor, and if possible to secure his election to the presidency. The two great political parties were marshalled by their respective leaders, and arrayed in open hostility to each other. The period was full of anxiety and danger. Foreign politics were so interwoven with those of our own, that the latter were considered interesting and important, only in proportion as they were favorable or opposed to the cause of revolutionary France. The depredations on our commerce, and the violations of our neutrality, perpetrated by the French, excited the just indignation of one party; while by the other, they were vindicated, and even justified on the ground of expediency, although they were acknowledged to be illegal and unrighteous. In such a state of agitated public feeling, Mr. Adams was elected to direct the

executive government of the United States. At the same time, the national councils were much divided. His successful progress depended, not on a united people whose confidence he possessed, but on so managing, as to ensure the continued support of the party by which he had been chosen. He was vigorously sustained by them for a time, although his policy did not entirely meet with their approbation. Their confidence in him from wavering, became feeble. Distrust and disaffection ensued. Harmony between him and his cabinet was disturbed. His party, by whom he had been supported, considered themselves as insulted by his treatment, and ungratefully requited, forsook him; and at the end of four years, he was permitted to retire from public employment, amid the triumphant rejoicings of those who patronized his successor; and attended with the censure and disgust of those, by whom he had been upheld. He seems to have imbibed the idea, that his friends sought to prescribe his course, and dictate his measures. A full measure of self-sufficiency, and a consciousness of official importance, which have never been denied him, instead of conciliating the esteem and ensuring the cordial support of his party, caused disaffection and terminated in his political prostration; and after the lapse of a few years, he united himself with the party who had persecuted him for more than ten years.

Some time after he retired to his home at Quincy, he was offered a nomination as a candidate for governor of Massachusetts. But having escaped from the political tempest, to the retreat of domestic tranquillity, he had no desire to appear again on the arena; but determined to remain the rest of his life, a quiet, though not an indifferent spectator of passing events. He declined the nomination.

In 1820, the convention of the commonwealth, appointed for revising the state constitution, unanimously requested him to act as their president. This honor he declined on account of his age and infirmities. The highly respectful terms in which the preamble to the vote, by which his election to that honorable station were expressed, and the flattering manner in which they were communicated to him, were peculiarly grateful to his feelings, and worthy of the assembly from which they proceeded. A committee of twelve members deputed by the convention, waited on him at his residence, and there presented to him the document containing the resolution of the convention. He received them with great kindness and with deep felt gratitude for this gratifying mark

of the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens ; but expressed his regret that his age and infirmities prevented his taking any active part in their important deliberations.

In the autumn of 1818, he buried his consort, with whom he had passed more than half a century in conjugal felicity. But for himself, it was reserved to see just half a century pass over, from the day when he fixed his signature, with his worthy compatriots, to the Declaration of American Independence and Sovereignty, as a nation among the nations of the earth. On that very day, while his fellow citizens were in joyful festivity, commemorating that event—on the day of jubilee, he, with another member of the committee which congress selected to prepare that instrument, breathed his last, and closed his mortal existence on the earth.

This event, which occurred near the close of his ninety-first year, so remarkable in many particulars, was extensively commemorated in the country, with many significant tokens of public mourning, orations, and eulogies ; in which the real sentiments and feelings of the people were frankly expressed.



### SAMUEL ADAMS.

SAMUEL ADAMS, the subject of this memoir, was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on the 22d day of September, 1722. The respectable family from which he descended, was one among those which early emigrated and settled in New England. His father, during many years, held the commission of justice of the peace, and was one of the board of selectmen of Boston ; and was annually chosen a representative of that town, in the Massachusetts house of assembly during a long period under the colonial government. He was possessed of considerable wealth ; and having resolved to give this son a public education, he placed him under the tuition of Mr. Lovell, at that time a celebrated teacher of a grammar school in Boston, to prepare him for admission to Harvard university. He was received a member of that literary institution at an early age, and took his degree of A. B. in 1740 ; and in two years after, received his second degree. He was an uncommonly sedate youth ; and both in the pre-

paratory school and throughout his collegiate term, he was remarkable for his assiduity in attending to his studies, and for punctuality in performing his collegiate duties.

The tendency of his reflections at that early age, may be inferred from the question which he proposed for discussion when he took his second degree. It was this, whether it be lawful to resist the supreme magistrate, if the commonwealth cannot be otherwise preserved. He adopted and defended the affirmative of the proposition; and in his manner of sustaining it, at that early age, evinced a decided attachment to the liberties of the people.

He also practised a very commendable frugality from early life. For being allowed a regular and fixed stipend by his father, without incurring the sneers or reproaches of his comrades, he saved from his paternal allowance a sum sufficient to defray the expense of publishing a pamphlet, entitled "Englishmen's Rights."

His father intended to have him educated for the profession of law. Whether at his own instance, is not known; but it was relinquished by his father, and he was put an apprentice to Thomas Cushing, a distinguished merchant of Boston, to qualify him for mercantile pursuits. He seems, however, not to have been partial to that business, for which his feelings were but ill adapted. Politics had engaged his thoughts even before he left college; and to the study of them he devoted much of his attention. For mutual benefit, he with several associates possessed of kindred feelings formed a club, which often met for political discussion, and to furnish, each in his turn, an essay to be published in *The Independent Advertiser*. The general character of those essays may be presumed from the title of the gazette in which they were published; and by means of them, the writers, by way of derision, incurred the nick-name of *the Whipping Club*.

His father gave him a considerable capital to commence business as a merchant. But having devoted his attention, during his apprenticeship, more to politics than to the object of his immediate pursuit, he was but indifferently qualified to manage a mercantile establishment. His success was therefore such as might have been anticipated. By imprudence in intrusting others with property, and remissness in attending to a business which never much engrossed his affections, his affairs soon became embarrassed, and at no very distant



period, so effectually deranged, that he became completely reduced.

When he was but twenty-five, his father died, and he, being the eldest son, was left with the care of the family. And on him also, devolved the management of the estate left by his deceased parent. His slight attention to business, and his predominating regard to politics, but poorly qualified him for a careful discharge of the duties which his situation demanded. His attention was bestowed continually on the proceedings of the parental government, that he might detect every beginning encroachment on the rights of the colonists. And he employed much time, both in writing, and in conversing with others, endeavoring to excite in them a similar vigilance. In this he was indefatigable. He was always on the popular side; hence in a later period, when the aspect of the times became more threatening, and the interests of the people more endangered by the projects and measures of the British parliament, he was always put forward by his fellow citizens, to oppose them, as their prime leader.

When intelligence was communicated by their agent in England, of the design to tax the colonies, and raise a revenue, which should be at the disposal of the parliament, he took his firm stand in opposition to the measure.

It was the custom at that period, when the towns met to elect their representatives to the general assembly, to instruct them respecting their legislative duties. By the first meeting for choosing representatives, after that intelligence had reached them, Mr. Adams was on the committee for drawing up their instructions. As chairman he was required to draft them. The instrument still remains in his hand writing; and in that manuscript is found the first public denial of the right of the British parliament, to tax the colonies without their own consent—the first denial of the supremacy of parliament—and the first public suggestion of an union on the part of all the colonies, as necessary to protect themselves against British aggression. This was as early as the year 1763. In 1764 there was a political club in Boston, which held private meetings. At those meetings, of which he was one of the most active members, decisive measures were projected, and so managed as to give a spring and direction to the public feelings. Here the determination was first made to oppose paying the duty on stamped paper. Although Mr. Adams was in favor of the opposition given to the stamp act,

by destroying the stamped paper, and the office whence it was issued in Boston, he was opposed to the riotous proceedings of the populace, in accomplishing this object ; and aided the civil magistrates in stopping them. He commenced his public life as a legislator in 1765, having been chosen a representative in the general assembly by the town of Boston. He became early distinguished in that body, for his intelligence, sagacity, and active exertions in supporting the popular rights of the colonies against the deep laid policy and the insidious aggressions of the ministry and parliament of Great Britain, by which they were intending to subject the colonists to their domination. His influence and great activity, in opposition to the arbitrary measures of the parliament, and their agents in Massachusetts, soon pointed him out to the governor's notice, as one whom it would be inexpedient to pass by with neglect. He was therefore represented by Governor Hutchinson, in a letter to a friend, who had inquired why Mr. Adams had not been silenced by office or governmental patronage ; that " such is the obstinacy and inflexible disposition of the man, that he can never be conciliated by any office or gift whatever." This is an honorable attestation to his integrity and patriotism ; especially when it is recollected that he was a poor man, as it respects property. Yielding to the overtures of the administration, would at once have placed him free from pecuniary embarrassment, and secured to him wealth and importance. The offer was made to him ; and it was promptly rejected.

He was chosen clerk of the house of representatives, soon after he took his seat the first time in that body. With him originated the suggestion of assembling the first congress ; which subsequently met in New York. This led, at a later period, to the meeting of the continental congress, to the confederation, and finally to that chain of great events connected with the war of independence.

During that period of contention between the military force which was quartered in Boston, and the citizens, which lasted several years, and came to its crisis in the *Boston Massacre*, he bore his full share, with his associates, John Adams, Hancock, Otis, &c. in the efforts which were resolutely made to effect their removal from the town. And it was owing to his decision of character, more than the influence of any other cause, that their removal was effected. A committee was chosen by the inhabitants of Boston, assembled in town meeting the morning after the outrage was committed by the

soldiers, to call on the acting governor, Hutchinson, and demand their immediate removal from the town. At the head of that committee, was Samuel Adams. Their first call on him proved unsuccessful—the governor pretending that he did not possess the power for removing them. This was a mere evasion, and was used solely to avoid doing a duty, for the performance of which he was fully empowered, as commander in chief of the military forces, but which did not correspond with his ideas or feelings. The town meeting, continuing in session to learn the result of their mission, on being informed that the governor did not comply with their request, directed their committee to wait on him again. The address of Mr. Adams to Governor Hutchinson, on this occasion, convinced him, not only that he had the power to remove them, but that any longer neglect or refusal to exercise it, in conformity to the expressed will of the citizens of Boston, would be at his own peril; and that whatever consequences resulted from it would be chargeable to him. The governor, with whatever reluctance, found it necessary to submit. He promised a compliance with their demands; that it should be commenced the day following; and that it should not be remitted until the entire removal of both regiments was effected.

Among the incidents which led on to the great American revolution, and had a powerful influence in preparing the people for deciding on the measure, was the establishment of committees of correspondence in the several colonies. The first suggestion of this is claimed both by Massachusetts and Virginia, to have been the suggestion of one of their distinguished citizens; Samuel Adams, by the former; and Richard Henry Lee, by the latter. But it appears, by their private correspondence, since brought before the public, that, without any interchange, they both conceived the plan about the same time. It was proposed to a town meeting in Boston, by Mr. Adams, in the latter part of the year 1772, and eagerly embraced by that body.

Although there exists no certain evidence to prove that either Governor Barnard, or Governor Hutchinson ever made any direct attempt by offers, or assurances of patronage, to detach Mr. Adams from his opposition to the ministerial projects against the rights of his country; yet it was reported, and believed, that such was the fact with respect to the former. The latter knew him too well to venture on such a step. **But, such was the popularity and influence of Mr. Adams,**

that the ministry deemed it expedient to try the experiment directly. For this they authorized Governor Gage; and he selected Colonel Fenton as his agent, to negotiate with him. It seems that these men had been so much accustomed to witness the consciences of public men as articles in market, at the command of him who became the highest bidder, that they did not dream of any want of success in this case. They had yet to learn that the human mind could be actuated by a principle, which rendered it proof against venality and corruption. In the result of this negotiation, they were effectually impressed with that truth. The celebrated answer of Mr. Adams, which he returned to Governor Gage by Fenton, was such, as left no room for doubts. After he had attentively listened to the offers of "such benefits as would be satisfactory, on the condition of his ceasing to oppose the measures of government, about which he was authorized to confer with Mr. Adams;" and, to the menaces of the evils that would be incurred by his rejecting his proposals—evils formidable indeed; Mr. Adams returned this message to Governor Gage, "I trust I have long since, made my peace with the King of kings. No personal consideration shall induce me to abandon the righteous cause of my country. Tell Governor Gage, it is the advice of Samuel Adams to him, no longer to insult the feelings of an exasperated people."

When it is recollected that his pecuniary embarrassments were urgent, and that his situation was peculiarly perilous, being marked out as an object of ministerial vengeance, this rejection of favor and gain—and a steady adherence to the cause of his country, whose prospects were far from promising, evinces an integrity of principle, and a patriotic virtue, which would have been celebrated in the brightest periods of Grecian or Roman history. The immediate consequence of this message to Governor Gage was, the issuing his memorable proclamation of his majesty's pardon to all of his misguided subjects, who should forthwith lay down their arms, and submit themselves, from which royal clemency and special favor, Samuel Adams and John Hancock only were excluded. This honorable exception operated powerfully to bind them still more strongly in the confidence and affection of the people; and prepared the way for their future promotion and advancement in public life. No event could have occurred at that time, better calculated to enhance their popularity in the community at large, for the support of whose

rights and dearest interests they had become such prominent champions, as to render them thus obnoxious to royal vengeance. To the people, it was a pledge of their future fidelity in every trust. And, to themselves, it was a perpetual stimulant to greater exertions, in opposing the encroachments of despotic power.

Mr. Adams, from his first admission into the Massachusetts house of assembly, as a representative of Boston, appears to have taken the lead in all the important measures presented for discussion. He was the first and most efficient member of that house, when delegates were chosen to represent the colony of Massachusetts in the first continental congress that met in Philadelphia. He projected the measure; and at a time when men's minds were not maturely decided on the expediency of the project, he, by his activity and address, procured a meeting of some influential members, whose opinion in its favor he secured; by perseverance he obtained a majority to act with him; and then in a secret session, five delegates were elected, notwithstanding the governor issued his official injunction to stay their proceedings, and to dissolve the assembly. Mr. Adams was one of the five delegates chosen on this occasion. In this transaction, the authority of the governor was put at defiance, and the door of their hall bolted against his entrance. His secretary, who was sent with a commission to dissolve the assembly, was refused admission, and staid on the door-steps outside, while the key was safely lodged in Samuel Adams's pocket.

Having now succeeded in obtaining the concurrence of the assembly to send delegates to the congress, and having been designated as one of the number, on the fifth day of the month of September, 1774, he took his seat in congress, in the city of Philadelphia. Of that great national assembly, he continued an active and efficient member until 1781, exhibiting an example of persevering attention to the numerous duties that devolved on him; a parallel to which can hardly be found. His name is to be found among the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

During his whole term of congressional life, he was actively employed in promoting those great national measures, which were devised and pursued for sustaining the nation until the happy termination of the great struggle in which it was engaged. The journals of congress, during that period, from time to time, will show his name on almost every important committee appointed by that body. In the most gloomy sea-

sons, and in those times when the prospects of the country were the most disheartening and adverse, when the hearts of many and even some of the members of that body were failing them for fear, he always kept up a cheerful spirit, and mildly reprov'd others for showing indications of depondency, well knowing that congress was looked to for an example by the people, and that such indications would produce a most unhappy influence through the community.

He had been accustomed for years, to confide in a just over-ruling Providence. He felt assured that the cause of his country was just and righteous; and during the darkest times of the war, which had been waged by the colonists for protecting their chartered rights against arbitrary usurpation, he always was persuaded, that ultimately success would crown their labors. "He trusted in God, and he was not confounded."

In 1781 Mr. Adams retired from congress, and returned to Boston, his place of domestic residence. After so long a term spent in the service of the public, and having largely participated in the most important transactions which led to a final separation of the colonies from the parent country, and to their establishment as an independant sovereign nation; on the near prospect of terminating hostilities in peace, and having obtained the great objects for which the country had taken up arms, by the acknowledgment of their independence by Great Britain; at his time of life, it might have seemed desirable to him to be allowed to pass his future years in the tranquillity of private life. But his fellow citizens still felt that they wanted his services, and by preferring him to public employment, they designed to manifest their continued confidence in him, and thus to express a grateful sense of obligations to him for his former patriotic exertions, and their approbation of his wisdom and fidelity. He was a member of the convention which formed the constitution of Massachusetts, and of the committee which drafted it.

He was successively a member of the senate of the commonwealth, president of that body, and a member of the convention of that state, which adopted the federal constitution of the United States. To these several expressions of the respect and attachment of his fellow citizens, ensued an election to the offices of lieutenant governor, and governor of the commonwealth. In the latter office he was annually re-elected, until age and infirmities required him to retire to private life. He died on the 3d day of October, 1803, in the eighty-second year of his age.

## ROBERT TREAT PAINE.

ROBERT TREAT PAINE was born in Boston, 1731. His parents were esteemed for their piety and respectability. His father was educated for the gospel ministry, and was for a few years pastor of a church in Weymouth, in the colony of Massachusetts. But his health being feeble, he found himself unable to perform the duties of the pastoral office, and he sought and obtained his dismissal from the people of his charge. For the same reason, he also relinquished the ministry, and removed to Boston, where he entered on the business of merchandise. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Treat, who was settled in Eastham, in the county of Barnstable. His maternal grandfather was Governor Treat, of Connecticut. His maternal grandmother was a daughter of the Rev. Samuel Willard, of Boston, who was much respected and greatly celebrated for piety and learning by his contemporaries.

If we remember the ardent piety of a large portion of the people of New England at that early period, their strict moral observances, and the careful attention which was given by parents to the cultivation of correct principles in their children, it will be very natural to conclude, that the mind of young Paine was cultivated with pious care. Such was the fact.

To prepare him for entering college, his father placed him under the instruction of the same Mr. Lovell, to whom the preliminary education of John Adams, Hancock, and others, who became distinguished in after life, had been intrusted.

From this time but little is known of him, till after he graduated; except that he was entered a member of Harvard College, at the age of 14 years.

After he left the university, he devoted himself for some months to keeping a school; an employment in which a large proportion of the literary men of all professions in New England, have been engaged during a part of their lives.

Having closed his business of school keeping, he made a voyage to Europe. To this he was induced by filial piety. His father proving unsuccessful in his business, had become reduced in his pecuniary circumstances, and was afflicted with sickness in some members of his family.

Mr. Paine pursued the study of theology for some time, and served as a chaplain on an expedition of the provincia.

droop to the north, in 1755; and he occasionally preached for some of the ministers in Boston, and the neighborhood.

But for some reasons, the nature of which we are left to infer, he thought proper to renounce the ministry of the gospel for the bar. This subject, however, is not deemed of sufficient importance to merit an investigation. Having resolved on the measure, he entered the office of Benjamin Pratt, a barrister of considerable distinction in the county of Suffolk, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, and subsequently chief justice of the colony of New York. While pursuing the study of law, he was necessitated to resort again to the employment of school keeping, to procure the requisite means for defraying his expenses.

On his being admitted to the bar, he settled in Boston, but after a short residence there he removed to Taunton, the shire town of Bristol county, thirty-six miles from Boston. In that town he resided many years, and had often to measure his strength, as an opposing advocate, with the celebrated Timothy Ruggles, a gentleman much distinguished for some singular traits of character, and more extensively known by the appellation of "Brigadier Ruggles;" of whom many singular anecdotes are even now related in that region. To Brigadier Ruggles Mr. Paine soon became a formidable rival in business; and this at that era, was viewed as an honorable testimony in his favor, and an indication of no inconsiderable merit in the public estimation.

Although Mr. Paine decidedly espoused the cause of civil liberty, as being the cause of the people of the colonies, in opposition to the oppressive measures of the ministry; and acted in unison with the other patriots of the age in that region; yet he seems to have conducted himself with so much prudence and discretion, that he possessed the full confidence of the executive of the province. For an attempt having been made to evade the revenue laws (which were of recent date and very obnoxious to the people,) in Bristol county, by clandestinely removing by night from the custody of the revenue officer, some property lately imported into that county from abroad, on which duties were payable; and when the officer was about to take possession of the property, to subject it to the exactions of the law, he was opposed by force; an application was made to the governor and council for redress. To provide the requisite relief, a commission of five magistrates was appointed in that county, to investigate the matter of complaint, and support the officer in performing his legal



duties. Mr. Paine was designated as a member of that commission, and he discharged the duty thus devolved on him, in connection with his colleagues, in a manner which received the full and entire approbation of the executive.

In 1768, after Governor Barnard had dissolved the legislature, because they had with closed doors resolved on sending a circular to the other colonies, requesting them to act in concert for the public good, which circular they would not rescind to gratify his excellency; some leading men of Boston called a convention of delegates from the several towns in the province, to devise measures for protecting the rights of the people against the encroachments which the ministerial party had been systematically pursuing, Mr. Paine attended as delegate from Taunton.

When the soldiers, who had perpetrated the *Boston Massacre*, were arraigned for trial on the charge of murder, he was employed by the town of Boston as counsel against the prisoners. The attorney general, whose official duty it was to prosecute, was unable to attend the court by reason of sickness. It became necessary to provide a substitute. The occasion was one of singular interest with all parties. And the selection of Mr. Paine for the station, if we consider the state of the times and the peculiar excitement existing among the people, is a strong indication of the estimation in which they viewed him, both as a firm patriot and an able lawyer.

The opinion of his talents and patriotic integrity, which was entertained by the inhabitants of Taunton at that critical period, when the public were universally agitated and distrustful, may be inferred from the various appointments to which they successively preferred him. In 1773 there was a committee of vigilance and correspondence established in the several towns in the province, with one of a similar character in Boston. Mr. Paine was chairman of that committee in Taunton. In the year following, the citizens elected him a representative to the provincial legislature; and again in 1774. This included the time when Chief Justice Oliver was impeached on a charge of receiving his stipend directly from the king, instead of the established usage of a grant from the general assembly. And he was one of the managers appointed by the house of representatives, to prosecute that impeachment. This impeachment of Mr. Justice Oliver was placed on the ground, that he was by reason of the mode of receiving his compensation, rendered more liable to be swayed by ministerial influence, being himself dependant on

the king directly for his salary, and entirely independent of the people, in whose courts he presided, and to whose decision their controversies and interests were subjected.

Mr. Paine was among the first of those, in Massachusetts, who advocated the appointment of delegates to a continental congress—was a member of that assembly by which the measure was resolved on, in a session of that body, after they had closed their doors against those active messengers, whom Governor Gage had sent to dissolve the assembly but who were refused admission; Mr. Paine was one of those chosen to represent Massachusetts in the first congress of the states, that convened in Philadelphia. He was returned to the same body the next year; and the continued confidence of his townsmen was manifested by their electing him a member of the provincial congress, which met in Concord, in the autumn of 1774 and spring of 1775. By that body he was placed on a committee to consider the state of the province.

In ordinary circumstances of peace, when the public mind is tranquil, when there exists nothing to excite suspicion and alarm, incidents like these just recited, would justly be considered as of trivial importance. But it was not so in the instance before us. Then every interest of the people was known to be in jeopardy; there was a settled purpose, on the part of the British government, to subject the colonies to their absolute control; to tax them arbitrarily, according to their pleasure; to withdraw all evidence of chartered rights from their possession; and to render the colonists entirely subservient to their will and pleasure. All this was well understood by the citizens. And, what rendered their situation still more perplexing, there was no inconsiderable portion of the inhabitants, concerning whose fidelity to their interests they were justly very suspicious. They felt it to be, as in truth it was, very important, when selecting men to perform the duties of any public office, to choose such only as were decidedly with them in principle and feeling, who possessed superior talents, in whose firmness, decision, patriotism, and virtue, they had confidence; and such as would be vigilant sentinels to guard and protect them against all invasions of their birthright and possessions. In such a time it was that Mr. Paine was ushered into public life, and such were the testimonials of the people's confidence repeatedly given him. It is on these grounds, and for these reasons, that they are considered as valuable records, worthy of being inserted in his biography.

Among the many cares which devolved on him, as a commissioner, those relating immediately to the war may be noticed with propriety. It is well known that the colonies, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, were very deficient in fire arms and ammunition—articles indispensable for prosecuting it with success. Congress early took these subjects into their consideration, with a view to furnishing them. They appointed a committee to introduce and encourage the manufacture of saltpetre; of which committee Mr. Paine was chairman. In this business his labors were abundant; and the success of the measures proposed and the plans suggested, was very beneficial to the country.

In the autumn of 1775 he was deputed by congress, with two colleagues, to visit the army under the command of General Schuyler, which was on the northern frontier. A commission of this kind is of a delicate character, and requires prudence, wisdom, and sound discretion in those entrusted with its execution. In this case the duties were important, and the powers committed to the deputies almost unlimited; yet they were discharged to the entire satisfaction of congress. He was then placed on a committee, of which he was chairman, to make contracts for muskets and bayonets, and to encourage and promote the manufacture of fire arms.

In, 1775 Massachusetts having formed their constitution, organized their courts. John Adams was selected for the chief justice, and Mr. Paine was appointed one of the side judges. But of that appointment he declined acceptance, and was again returned a member of congress in December, 1775. In April, 1776, he was on a committee for procuring cannon for the public service. And in June following, he, Mr. Jefferson, and Mr. Rutledge, by appointment, reported rules for regulating congress in their debates. In the same month he was designated with others to investigate the causes of the miscarriages of the plans which had been adopted for making an impression in Canada. And on the fourth day of July, he was present, and fully prepared, to affix his signature to that instrument which severed for ever, from the parent government of Great Britain, the United States of North America, and introduced them to the rank of an independent people among the sovereign nations of the world.

He was chosen a delegate to congress again, for 1777, and 1778, and during a portion of that period was employed in several offices in the government of Massachusetts, and a part of the session of their legislature he was speaker of the house of

representatives; and in 1777, he was appointed attorney general of the commonwealth, by an unanimous vote of the council and house of representatives.

Such was the fluctuating value of the currency of the country, that it was deemed necessary, in order to sustain the operations of the government, to adopt some measure for giving it a standard value. For this delicate purpose a commission was designated to meet at New Haven, in Connecticut. He was one of the committee chosen by Massachusetts. Indeed, either in his native state, or as their delegate to congress, his whole time was engrossed by incessant employment to promote the great interests of his country; and this at the time when her prospects were more gloomy, and her burdens more oppressive, than at any other period of the struggle in which she was involved.

Early in the year 1778, it was proposed to form a constitution of civil government for Massachusetts, and Mr. Paine was one of a committee for that purpose, appointed by the legislature. As the draught which that committee presented did not meet with acceptance by the people, the business was resumed in the year following; and he was chosen a delegate to the convention which formed the constitution, and one of the committee which reported the constitution. It was adopted in 1780, and has been in operation almost half a century, having experienced only some slight amendments in the meantime.

He held the office of attorney general until 1790, when, having been appointed a judge of the supreme judicial court, he took his seat on the bench; although for reasons which operated at the time of his appointment to the office at a former period, he had declined it. He continued to discharge the duties of a judge until 1804, a period of fourteen years; at which time he was admonished by age and infirmities, to retire from active life. He was, however, elected to the office of counsellor of the commonwealth for the year 1804.

He died in 1814, at the age of eighty-four years. He devoted a large portion of the active years of his long life to the public service, in which he had filled numerous and various offices; the several duties of which he performed with usefulness and fidelity to his country.

He was ostensibly stern in his deportment, and austere in his manners; but kind and gentle in his family, and sincere and warm in his friendships. He took a lively and feeling interest in the civil, literary, and religious institutions of the

country, particularly of his native New England; and manifested, on all proper occasions, his sense of the great importance of the religious establishments of New England, in their connection with the welfare of society.

Thus lived, and thus died Robert Treat Paine, whose name will go down to future ages in the history of his times, as one of the fathers of the American republic, and one of the patriotic founders of the infant nation. And to him will belong the distinguished honor of having, together with his colleagues, heroically affixed his name to the Declaration of the Independence of the United States of North America.



### ELBRIDGE GERRY.

THIS gentleman, whose name is inscribed on the Declaration of Independence of the United States of North America, was born in the province of Massachusetts, in the town of Marblehead, in July, 1744. This town is situated about 14 miles N. E. of Boston, and borders on Massachusetts Bay. It is built in a rustic manner, and its inhabitants have been, at all times, distinguished for their hardy and successful enterprise in prosecuting the fisheries, particularly the cod fishery. Here his father settled, and found ample scope for exerting his commercial enterprise. And here, by his persevering and successful industry, he acquired a considerable fortune. Being possessed of the requisite means, he determined to give his son a literary education; and for this purpose, after having obtained the necessary preparation, by the usual course of studies, he was entered a member of Harvard university. During his collegiate term, he acquired the reputation of a good scholar; and at its close, graduated a bachelor of arts in 1762.

Soon after his return from college, he entered into commerce; and prosecuted it with such success, that in a few years he had acquired a handsome property and established a very favorable character among his fellow citizens. Having previously to that period devoted his attention to the progress of events in relation to Great Britain and his native country, and he early became persuaded with his compatriots of Massachusetts, that measures were fast ripening for open

hostilities. Although for many reasons they sincerely deprecated such a result, yet they soon found it necessary, in order to meet it in the best manner they could, to adopt such preliminary measures as the condition of the colonies would admit of. As Mr. Gerry had become popular in his native town, and had manifested decision of purpose, and much intelligence on those subjects which interested every individual in the community, he was early selected by his fellow citizens to represent them in the general court of the province. In the latter part of May, 1773, he appeared the first time in that body, as a representative of Marblehead; and very soon became distinguished as a leading, fearless, active, and zealous member, and as one of the influential political leaders in the country, in opposition to the British ministry, and their hostile measures towards the North American colonies. Having been called to act his part in the new theatre he had now entered, he seems to have been qualified like the other patriots who were destined to take their several parts, as actors with him in the great drama, and well fitted to perform them in the best manner for the future and lasting benefit of the country. The crisis was appalling; the rencounter, tremendous; but he and his distinguished fellow laborers were found adequate to meet it; and they came out of the conflict with triumph.

Mr. Gerry was an active and useful member of all the important committees of vigilance, of correspondence, and of devising and putting in operation measures of defence against the designs of the foes. A civil war was deprecated by all the leading patriots of that day. But the measures which the British government had long pursued towards the colonies, had fully persuaded them that it must take place; that they could no otherwise avoid it, than by submitting passively to whatever impositions the ministry might please to lay on them. This only other alternative was wholly inadmissible, and they unitedly determined to prepare for the storm in the best manner they were able, contend with it manfully, and triumph or perish. Although that era is still remembered, and its terrors are yet fresh in the minds of many still living, a few years only will pass away, and they will be known to the living, only as facts recorded in the history of the times.

During the administration of Governor Hutchinson, in Massachusetts, some person, (supposed to have been the governor himself) had written, and forwarded to England, letters of an inflammatory character, which were designed to increase

the bitter feelings that existed in the government at home, towards the inhabitants of that province. By some means, Doctor Franklin, then in England, got possession of them, and forwarded them to his friend in Boston. Soon after they had been received and canvassed, Mr. John Adams introduced resolutions into the general court, which had a direct relation to the governor; and which probably hastened his return to England. Mr. Gerry, though young in public life, united with Adams and others in supporting and prosecuting the objects comprised in those resolutions. He also united with him in most of those measures which he instituted about that time; and which ultimately terminated in the prostration of the royal government in Massachusetts.

He took an active part, with his associates, in impeaching the judges; in opposing the importation of tea; the Boston port bill; in establishing a non-intercourse system; and in arranging an intercourse with the other colonies, for organizing and securing effectual measures of defence, against the encroachments of the British upon their liberties and privileges. He was ever active in concerting the most efficient measures for securing and guarding the public welfare. These were numerous; but not necessary to be repeated here, as they are carefully enumerated in the lives of some of his colleagues, who inscribed their names on the same document which bears his.

Mr. Gerry was a member of the first provincial congress, which was organized in Salem, and adjourned to Concord, in Massachusetts. This was soon after Governor Gage succeeded Governor Hutchinson. In that congress, he was an active and leading member; and zealously promoted all the important measures which they adopted. At the expiration of the term for which the delegates were chosen to this first congress of the province, a second was organized. Of this also he was a member; and was placed on the two great committees of safety and supplies. These committees were executive, and required the utmost activity and vigilance. The times and circumstances of the country, were such as rendered these indispensable. They had an artful power to oppose, which was planning to collect in Boston, all the arms, cannon, and ammunition, which had been deposited in different towns in the province, that they might be under the control of the government, and arrested from the power of the inhabitants. This was in the year 1775; the year in which

the British force marched to Concord, and Lexington, where open hostilities between the two countries commenced.

It was during the march of the English force to Concord, through Cambridge, when the committee of supplies had been in session, that Mr. Gerry, and Colonels Lee and Orne, had remained over night. They were very near being captured by a detachment that surrounded the house in which they were lodged. With much difficulty, however, they made their escape to a secure retreat, with very little covering beside their night-dresses. There they concealed themselves until the danger to which they had been exposed had passed by. They then returned, and spread the alarm among the inhabitants.

On the night preceding the battle of Bunker's Hill, Mr. Gerry, with his intimate friend, General Warren, who fell in that engagement, retired to the same bed. In the morning they separated with an affectionate farewell, to meet no more in this world. Mr. Gerry went, as his duty called him, to attend a meeting of the congress in Watertown on that day; and Warren, to meet death on Bunker's memorable battleground.

Mr. Gerry was appointed a judge of the court of admiralty, by the first general assembly that was chosen, as a substitute for the provincial congress, which had for some time constituted the civil government of the state. It was an office of much importance, and considerable emolument. But he declined accepting the appointment, because he preferred a more active life, which he thought better adapted to his age and his habits; and in which he was convinced he should be more useful in promoting the cause of his fellow citizens. This decision did not lessen the confidence they had reposed in him; for, in January, 1776, he was chosen a member of the continental congress, then sitting in Philadelphia, with Hancock, Paine, and the two Adams. In this body, where there was important business enough to occupy the attention, and demand the talents of all, Mr. Gerry was early appointed to act on many of the most important interests of the public. To him and his colleagues, were committed the several duties of superintending the treasury, of reporting the best method of supplying the army in Canada—for raising the necessary supplies for defraying the expenses of the war, for the year 1778; and various other stations, the duties of which were momentous, and of vast importance to the national success. In the performance of these duties, he was



active, and acquitted himself with fidelity, to the approbation of congress, and the state which he represented. This was fully evinced by their appointing him again to represent them the following year, in the same honorable body. In 1777, he was not only continued in the several employments which had been assigned to him the year preceding, but appointed to others, various in their objects and details, and involving an importance in their consequences, fully equal to any with which he had been before intrusted. Among these was "a committee of commerce;" a committee to visit the main army under Washington, to adjust some difficulties in the commissary department. He, with Mr. Livingston and Mr. Clymer, were instructed to repair to head quarters; and were vested with full powers to adopt whatever measures the state of the case rendered necessary.

When the subject of the confederation came before congress, which measure was found necessary for providing a more efficient government than had hitherto been adopted by the existing congress—Mr. Gerry resolutely opposed the measure, brought forward by the delegates from Virginia, for depriving the small states of their equal representation in congress; and of allowing votes in proportion to population. The subsequent formation of the federal constitution, and its adoption by the people of the several states, have furnished proof of the correctness of his views, in relation to that subject, even at that early period. It was vehemently urged by delegates from Virginia, and some other of the large states; but as strenuously opposed by those of the small states, who found zealous coadjutors in Mr. Gerry, and his colleagues.

When his friend and colleague, Hancock, vacated the office of president of congress, after having held it for nearly three years, a vote of thanks to him was proposed by a member from another state. This Mr. Gerry opposed as anti-republican, (though personally his warm friend,) and as tending to render such testimonies unimportant by their frequency. During his subsequent continuance in congress, Mr. Gerry was laboriously engaged in the various measures which were projected by himself and others, for remedying existing evils relative to the army department, and giving effect and success to the military operations. This department appears to have been a favorite one with him; and for promoting its interests he seems to have been peculiarly and happily adapted in his views and disposition.

After having devoted about five years of his time exclu-

sively to the service of the public in congress, in 1780 he retired, with a view to his private affairs, which had suffered by reason of his absence, and which required his immediate superintendence. In 1783, however, he was, by joint ballot of both houses of the legislature, again returned a member of congress. He was elected in June, and took his seat in August; and he immediately entered on the course of active usefulness which he had formerly pursued. His extensive acquaintance with financial concerns, the warm interest he felt for every thing which regarded the welfare of the army and the large experience he had acquired in almost every department of public affairs, at once designated him to congress as a candidate for his former stations on the most important committees appointed by that body. His knowledge of the intricate business of finance, pointed him out as a competent member of a committee for revising the system, which had long been conducted in a loose and embarrassing manner, and to suggest and devise such improvements, as the condition and circumstances of the country were susceptible of. To his qualifications for this important service, the late President Adams bears full testimony, in a letter written some years since; in which he also gives him the honorable credit of having, while a member of the committee of finance, originated the most valuable provisions of the system subsequently adopted, and now in successful operation. No man was better acquainted with his character and qualifications than Mr. Adams.

It would exceed the limits which can be allowed to this sketch, were we to specify all the particulars in which Mr. Gerry zealously advocated the interests of the army; and urged an honorable remuneration of the officers and soldiers, for their patient endurance of privations and sufferings, and their meritorious and patriotic services. He was from the first their sincere, warm-hearted, and zealous advocate; inasmuch that they voluntarily gave him the title of the "Soldier's Friend."

In December, 1784, he took his seat in the old congress for the last time. During this term, the same honorable confidence in congress in his talents, integrity, and patriotism, so long manifested, was continued; and he justified it by his fidelity and activity in performing the duties which continually devolved on him.

Having served his country in congress, through various seasons of trial and difficulty, with honor to himself and bene-

fit to the public, he retired in September, 1785, to his native state, and fixed his residence at Cambridge, the seat of Harvard university, a few miles from Boston, where he had received his collegiate education. From this retirement he was again called to take an active part in forming a new constitution of government, the old confederation having been found insufficient for the exigencies of the nation in a time of peace, however well it had answered in a time of war, when a sense of common danger, and the external pressure of a powerful foreign enemy bore strongly upon the states. He was chosen a delegate to the convention, which met at Philadelphia, when the present constitution of the United States was formed. Many of the leading principles incorporated in the constitution, he strenuously opposed. And so objectionable did it appear to him, as a whole, that he never subscribed the instrument. He wrote a long letter to his constituents, in which he assigned his reasons at length for disapproving of it. Nor has it ever been ascertained that his objections were so obviated, as that he cordially approved of it; though after its adoption, he deemed it to be his duty, and the duty of all, to support it with fidelity.

After it had become the supreme law, and the states which had adopted it were prepared to elect their representatives to the first congress, under its auspices, (Massachusetts having been divided into districts for electing representatives,) Mr. Gerry was chosen to represent the district in which he resided. This was not, however, without considerable opposition, as his objections to the constitution had rendered him unpopular with a considerable portion of the community. He was twice returned a member of the house of representatives under the new constitution, and served during the four years, in a manner correspondent with his former activity and intelligence in the old congress. At the close of his second term, he was again proposed by his constituents as a candidate; but he declined standing for another election; and retired once more to his own residence at Cambridge.

From his retirement he was called by the first President Adams, who nominated him, together with Messrs. Pinkney and Marshall, an envoy to the French republic. It was soon after Citizen Genet had arrived in the United States, as minister from France to our government. Taking advantage of the enthusiastic predilection of republican institutions, and their ignorance of the characters and designs of the then rulers of France, this minister had artfully excited party divisions

in the states, which have not ceased to this day. After Mr. Pinckney had been refused by that government to be received as a minister plenipotentiary from the government of the United States; and when the political relations of the two nations were in a very critical situation, it must be acknowledged that the appointment, though highly important, was of a singularly delicate character. The joint mission was not received; and after remaining some time unaccredited, and holding an unofficial intercourse with the French government, in the spring of 1798, Messrs. Pinckney and Marshall were ordered to quit the French territory, with an intimation that Mr. Gerry was desired to remain. In the excited state of feeling in this country, and which was greatly aggravated by this indignity cast on the people by the treatment their envoys had received at the hands of the French rulers, it was considered improper in Mr. Gerry, not immediately to reject the proffer, and with his colleagues instantly leave the French territory. But he deemed it his duty to remain. He did so. And by so doing, he degraded himself in the estimation of a large portion of the people of this nation, who felt for the honor and independence of their government; and rose in the estimation of another portion of the people, who, at that period, entertained a strong partiality for the French republic. From that period of strong party excitement the great popularity which he had enjoyed with many of his revolutionary friends declined.

After his return from France, the party in Massachusetts, with which he was now identified, selected him as their candidate for governor. The first effort was unsuccessful. The next year he declined being a candidate for the office; but consented to run as an elector of president and vice president.

In 1810, he consented to stand again as a candidate for the office of governor of the commonwealth. In this attempt his partizans succeeded; and the following year he was re-elected to the same honorable office. The period when he acted as governor of Massachusetts, was one in which party politics were in a high state of excitement; and as he had become identified with that party which assumed the name *Republican*, it would hardly be expected that a man of his temperament would be able, if disposed, wholly to exempt himself from the sway of party influence.

After Mr. Jefferson's election as president of the United States, many members of both houses of congress, to ensure their ascendancy in future, commenced the system of what

was emphatically stiled, *caucus nominations*. By this means, although pretending to act only in their individual capacity, but departing entirely from the spirit of the constitution, in violation of every true principle of real republicanism, they by publicly nominating, virtually elected, the two first officers of the government. It was during the existence of this powerful system, that Mr. Gerry was nominated by a congressional caucus, for the office of vice president of the United States. He was of course elected; and after having sustained the office, and performed its duties as president of the senate, during a part of two sessions of congress, and less than two years from his inauguration, he suddenly closed his life in Washington City, November 23, 1814, at the age of seventy years. His remains are entombed in the congressional cemetery in Washington City; and a handsome monument was erected by direction of congress over his remains.

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## RHODE ISLAND.

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### STEPHEN HOPKINS.

STEPHEN HOPKINS was a native of the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. He was born in what was then the town of Providence, but is now, by a subsequent division of that town, within the limits of Scituate. His birth occurred on the 7th day of March, 1707. His father was William Hopkins, an only child of his parents; and his mother was Ruth Wilkinson, a daughter of one of the first baptist ministers of Providence.

Stephen was favored with but few advantages for procuring an education in early life. Those he did enjoy, were not extended beyond what could be derived from an ordinary country school. He advantageously improved these, so that he acquired an excellent acquaintance with penmanship, and to some extent with mathematics. He was a good practical surveyor of lands.

His early occupation, like that of his father, was tilling his

farm. He prosecuted the business of a farmer until 1731, when he sold his estate in Scituate, and removed to Providence. There he afterwards made his home to the close of his life.

His first public employment, was the town clerkship of Scituate, from which he rose by a regular gradation to the first offices in the gift of the state. He was governor and chief justice of the state alternately; and had filled almost every office of a subordinate grade, in his progress to the highest honors. Industry and perseverance were prominent traits of his character.

He was chosen a representative for Scituate to the general assembly, first in 1732; and was re-chosen annually until 1738, inclusive. Again he was chosen in 1741, and became speaker of the house of representatives. After he removed into Providence, he commenced mercantile business; but such was the popular confidence in him, that he was elected by the people of that town the year he became an inhabitant of it, to the same office; and he was continued in the chair of speaker of the house of representatives. He was, with occasional omissions, chosen a representative for Providence and elected speaker of the house up to 1751; when he was returned for the fourteenth time. In that year he received the appointment of chief justice of the colony. In 1754, he was a commissioner to a convention which met in Albany, consisting of delegates from the several colonies, to hold a conference with the Indians, and secure their friendship; and also to form some plan for security against French encroachments through Canada, in the approaching war.

In 1756, he was elected governor of the colony, and continued to discharge the duties of that office, at intervals, until 1767, inclusive. At that time, political dissension was extensive in the colony, and parties were so much exasperated, that to appease them, and restore peace and harmony, he deemed it expedient to decline a re-election, which he did publicly, in an official communication to the legislature in session.

In the alarming period of the French war, in 1757, Governor Hopkins greatly exerted himself to strengthen the English and colonial army, by promoting volunteer enrolments in Rhode Island. It was at the time when the British forces, having sustained serious disasters in the preceding campaigns, were incompetent to stop the progress of the French under Montcalm, and when the English settlements in the

north were almost without protection, that he raised a company of volunteers in Providence, took the command of them, to which they had elected him, and was about to march for the scene of action, when by an unexpected withdrawal of the French Canadians and Indians, it became unnecessary.

After the parties, which had so long distracted and divided the colony, had subsided, and tranquillity had been restored, he appeared again in the legislature. He represented Providence in that body in 1772, 3, 4, and 5, and in the two last years he represented the colony in congress, in Philadelphia. In 1774, he was again appointed chief justice, holding at the same time three offices, viz. that of representative of Providence in the general assembly of the colony, delegate to the general congress, and chief justice of Rhode Island.

The first appointment to congress was in August, 1774. He attended the first congress that ever met, as a national council, in Philadelphia, and discharged his duty with an honorable fidelity, which met with the approbation of his constituents.

At this period he introduced a bill into the assembly of Rhode Island, to prevent the importation of slaves into the colony. In 1773, he manumitted all his own slaves; and had, in his last will and testament, which was drawn and executed before that date, decreed them liberty at his decease.

In 1775, he sustained and executed the duties of the important office of a member of the committee of public safety; a body of men existing in all the towns of the colonies, consisting of warm-hearted and trusty men, who did as much in their respective spheres to promote the cause, and secure the liberties of the colonists, perhaps, as the several legislative bodies did in theirs. They were executive committees of vigilance, armed with a power undefined, and almost unlimited; and they were efficient engines for carrying into immediate effect all the measures for the public security, recommended by the assemblies in the several provinces.

In May, 1775, Governor Hopkins was again elected a delegate to congress; and again in the same month, in 1776, Mr. Ellery was his colleague; and in this year it was that they both voted for, and set their names to, the Declaration of Independence.

There is a very striking feature in the signature of Mr. Hopkins to that document, which has immortalized all who signed it; it is the uneven, tremulous appearance, indicating a hand agitated by trepidation of mind. It was caused, not

by fear, for he knew not fear, but by a bodily infirmity, commonly stiled "shaking palsy," which had attended him for many years, insomuch that most of his writing was done for him by an amauensis. When he attempted to affix his signature, it was done only by steadying his right hand, as much as possible, with his left.

In that alarming period, which has been emphatically styled "the time that tried men's souls," Mr. Hopkins was continually employed, and very active in some public service. In 1776, he was chosen a commissioner to meet with others from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, for special purposes in relation to the defence of the New England colonies; and when they met in Providence, he was chosen their president. He presided also at a similar meeting convened the following year, at Springfield, in Massachusetts. In May, 1778, he was chosen a representative to congress the last time; and in the years 1777, 8, and 9, he was a member of the general assembly of Rhode Island, notwithstanding his advanced age. He was over seventy, and yet active and unwearied in his exertions for the public good.

His business in early life eminently fitted him for usefulness on several committees in congress, in which his services were both able and valuable. This was particularly the fact, on committees for fitting out armed vessels to war against the enemy's commerce; to devise ways and means for furnishing the colonies with a naval armament; and on the rules and orders for regulating a navy. He was a member, for Rhode Island, on the committee which drew up and reported the confederation.

This gentleman furnishes another striking instance of the power of a strong mind, and application to study, by which a want of enlarged means for acquiring an early and systematic education is overcome—many of which may be seen recorded in these biographical sketches of those truly great men, who exerted a commanding influence in the struggle for American independence. His early means for improving his mind, were those usually found in a common school, and limited at that time to reading, writing, and arithmetic. But, by indulging his desire after knowledge, with a close application to books, he stored his mind with much general information, and became, to a good degree, a scholar, a man of science, and general literature. He mingled considerably in public debate; but, though he always spoke to the point on



every subject, he was, by his brevity, sure never to weary his hearers.

He was, in his time, a distinguished mathematician, and rendered great assistance in observing the transit of Venus, which occurred in June, 1769.

He was friendly to diffusing the means of education. Having himself felt the want of instruction in early life, and afterwards realized the benefits of extensive attainments in knowledge by his own efforts, he was desirous that others should possess and enjoy the means for cultivating and improving their minds on a liberal and broad foundation. He was a friend and patron of all measures which promoted the general education of youth. He was one of the prime movers in forming a public library in Providence, in 1750. It was afterwards burnt, and he assisted in re-establishing it.

During a long period he was chancellor of Rhode Island college. He was also a member of the American Philosophical Society. He was a projector and patron of the free schools in Providence, which have long existed in that handsome and flourishing town, by which it has acquired, and long sustained, a reputation for the general intelligence of its inhabitants.

As a man of business, whether he was employed in public or private service, he was eminently industrious and systematic.

He was an advocate for both religious and civil liberty. He was a regular attendant at the Friends' meeting, whose religious principles he professed, though it is not known that he was an avowed member of that society. It was often the fact that their meetings were held in his own house.

He was twice united by marriage. His first wife was Sarah Scott, who was a descendant from the first man professedly of that religious persuasion who settled in Providence. They were united in 1726. She expired in 1753, in the forty-seventh year of her age. Of seven children by her, five sons and two daughters, he lost by death four. One of the daughters died in childhood.

In 1755, he was married a second time to Anna Smith. This was her second marriage also. She was the widow of Benjamin Smith.

After having served his generation with great fidelity and distinguished usefulness, in the fear of God, through a long and chequered life, he expired on the 13th day of July, 1785, in the seventy-ninth year of his age.

His memory is much revered and respected by those who remember him, and is handed down with veneration in the state which he served in numerous offices of public trust, and in the town where he resided ; and posterity will long esteem him their benefactor.



### WILLIAM ELLERY.

WILLIAM ELLERY, the subject of this brief sketch; was born at Newport, Rhode Island, the 22d day of December, 1727. His father, who had himself received a liberal education, devoted much time and care in instructing and superintending the early education of his son. By his judicious efforts, William early imbibed a fondness for reading, and a more than common eagerness for acquiring useful information. Having obtained the requisite qualifications for admission to college, his father placed him at Harvard university in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While a member of that seminary he was distinguished, among his contemporary students, as a close applicant to books, and particularly ardent in acquiring a correct knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, in which he became a singular proficient; and he retained his partiality for them even to his very last *hour of life*. In his hours of relaxation, from business, the study of the Greek and Latin classic writers was his favorite employment, which he uniformly perused in the original, without the assistance of any translation, and with the utmost facility.

He passed through his collegiate term with uncommon industry, and graduated in 1747, at the age of twenty, with the reputation of being a good scholar. He immediately returned to the place of his nativity, and commenced the study of law, the profession of his choice for his future business of life.

Newport was at that early date, one of the most flourishing places in the British American colonies. It lies on the eastern side of one of the finest harbor in the world, and on the western declivity of as beautiful a rising ground as can be found in any portion of this widely extended country.

Newport, at the time when Mr. Ellery commenced the

practice of law, afforded as fair a prospect of success to a man of industry and talents in the profession, as almost any other in the country. There he opened an office, and continued in the practice, for about twenty years. His success was flattering, and enabled him to acquire a competent fortune. It also presented him before his fellow citizens in a favorable manner, and enabled them to form a just estimate of his character. He closely observed, and carefully investigated, all the public measures of the government in England, their tendency, and the bearing they were intended to have upon the rights of the colonies. No citizens in the North American provinces, were more jealous of encroachments on their constitutional and chartered rights, than those of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. This small colony had been more favored, or rather less oppressed, than some of the neighboring and adjoining colonies. But, although the people of that colony had no particular cause of complaint; they, nevertheless, beheld with the cautious jealousy of freedom, the encroachments attempted to be made and established in other provinces; and felt a full measure of alarm at the arbitrary conduct of the British parliament, towards the neighboring colonies. The intelligent and reflecting inhabitants of Rhode Island, clearly foresaw, if the measures attempted to be imposed on Massachusetts, New York, and some others of the provinces, were suffered to go into operation, the same, or others equally burdensome and unconstitutional, might be put in force in their colony. This state of things so highly interesting to the common interests of all the colonies, induced the patriotic citizens of that province, to inquire what measures ought to be taken to check the progress of the public danger.

Among these, William Ellery held a high rank in the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens.

The determination to resist encroachments on their rights, diffused among the citizens of that province, was nobly evinced in the attack on the armed sloop *Liberty*, by citizens of Newport, in June, 1769; and on the *Gaspee* in June, 1772. That resolute spirit had been kindled by the leading and influential individuals, who directed the public sentiments; and it was faithfully, and continually cherished by them, until it became a common feeling through the whole population of the province.

The same spirit was again manifested in a bold and open defiance of the royal authority, when the proclamation reached

them, prohibiting the importation of fire arms from Great Britain to the colonies; they rose in such force, that they took possession of the king's fort in Newport, dismantled it, and secured all the cannon, amounting to forty pieces. In truth, while Massachusetts and Virginia have been contesting the question to which belongs the honor of beginning the contest, that led to the independence of the American colonies, the truth of history awards it to the state of Rhode Island. In that province, there was no demurring on the great question of adopting decisive measures of resistance to the usurpations of the British parliament. The determination to resist, and to defend their rights, was universal; and when the proposal for the meeting of a general congress of delegates from all the provinces in 1774 was made, it found in Rhode Island, an universal readiness to concur, and to elect delegates for the purpose. In truth, that colony was so far in advance of the others, in her views of what was necessary, and her resolution to pursue it, that by a legislative act, as early as May, 1776, Rhode Island withdrew her allegiance from the king of Great Britain, and declared herself independent of the British government. The reasons for taking this step, were published in a pamphlet by legislative authority at the time.

Thus prepared, and with such feelings, Rhode Island appointed Stephen Hopkins and William Ellery, her delegates to the congress which was to convene in May, 1776, to carry the records of their decision, and of their readiness to concur with the other colonies in such measures, for the common defence and common interests of the whole, as congress might deem it wise and expedient to adopt. Those gentlemen attended, and entered on the duties of their appointment in congress in May, 1776.

It is well known that the old congress submitted the projecting and maturing of all important measures to select committees. Mr. Ellery, as may be seen by the journals of congress, while he was a member, sustained his full share of appointments of that kind; and he discharged the several duties assigned to him with activity, promptitude, and sound discretion. It was in this session, that the independence of the colonies was declared. He voted for it; and signed the engrossed declaration, on the second day of August, 1776; the day on which the parchment was presented to congress for the individual signatures of the members.

Mr. Ellery felt a strong interest, and took an active part in

promoting whatever measures were urged for advancing the naval and marine affairs of the country. While he was thus laboring to promote, and secure the best interests of the states, it will be recollected that his own private interests were destined, by their peculiarly exposed situation, to suffer by the depredations of the British, whose hostile feelings were much embittered against the delegates to congress. Having taken possession of Newport, and the south part of Rhode Island, in 1774, the British wreaked their resentment against Mr. Ellery by burning his dwelling house, and depredating on his property. Notwithstanding the exposure of his estate urgently required his retirement from congress, with a view to its preservation, so far as it might be practicable; being persuaded that his presence in his seat was requisite, he did not vacate it; but left his private concerns to the fate that might befall them.

During the year 1778, Mr. Ellery remained in congress, with the exception of only a few weeks, which he spent in Rhode Island, throughout the year.

In June of this year, having been empowered by the legislature, he ratified, on behalf of that state, the articles of the confederation.

The few weeks which he spent in Rhode Island in 1778, were not devoted to his private concerns, but to the public benefit.

A project had been concerted for compelling the British to evacuate the island; and Mr. Ellery, believing that he should be more useful on the ground, than he would be by remaining in Philadelphia, left congress for a few weeks, and repaired to the scene of action to render whatever assistance might be in his power, in ridding the island of its invaders. The plan though well devised, it is known proved abortive; and he immediately returned to the scene of his public duties in Philadelphia.

In consequence of the invasion of Rhode Island by the British, a number of the inhabitants were compelled to leave their habitations, and relinquish their employments. By reason of this necessity, they were cast destitute of the necessary means of subsistence, upon the settlements in the vicinity, and subjected to severe sufferings. They were in danger of starvation. There was an embargo laid on the exportation of provisions, by Connecticut and New York, which was then in force. Mr. Ellery exerted his influence in congress, to procure a recommendation from that body to the gover-

nors of those respective states, to have their embargoes so far suspended, as to admit of the supplying those sufferers in Rhode Island, with the provisions necessary for their preservation from the distresses and horrors of famine.

During the year 1779, in which those measures were adopted for the relief of his suffering fellow citizens, he was called to engage in two important concerns of public interest and of a delicate nature. The first was, arranging and settling some diplomatic difficulties, in which the commissioners who had been sent by congress to Europe, had become involved. The other was, an adjustment of embarrassments which arose from the admiralty courts, the proceedings of which, as they were then constituted, were found sometimes to lead to a conflict between the rightful authority of congress and that of the individual states. Mr. Ellery presented a report to congress, as the agent of the committee to which the business had been referred, which was adopted; and put those difficulties at rest for that time. But in 1781, they again recurred, and the subject was again referred to him and two others, and the evils were once more removed.

Early in the year 1782, Mr. Ellery was designated by congress, as their organ for communicating to Major General Greene, their sense of his important military services in the southern states.

In 1784, he was one of the committee to whom the definitive treaty of peace with Great Britain was submitted.

One of his latest efforts in congress, in 1785, (which was his last year in the old congress,) was an united effort with Mr. Rufus King, to abolish slavery in the United States. Mr. King offered, and Mr. Ellery seconded the resolution for this purpose, and advocated it with his utmost powers. Thus evincing, at that early period, his view of the traffic in slaves, by the practice of which his state was engaged for many years after.

In 1786, congress elected him commissioner of the continental loan office for Rhode Island; and the legislature of that state appointed him chief justice of their highest court.

After the federal constitution was adopted, and the new government put in operation, he was appointed under President Washington, collector of the customs for the port of Newport. This office he retained to the close of his life. The business of this office, which he conducted during the long term of thirty years, he managed with such consummate

prudence and carefulness, that the government sustained the loss of only a single bond, amounting to two hundred dollars; and on that he had taken the endorsement of no less than five different sureties.

The evening of his life was spent in tranquillity and in the enjoyment of a moderate competence. This competence he derived from the income of his office, and the savings he was able to make out of the wreck of his property, which the British had destroyed while in possession of Rhode Island.

He read the Bible much, and from its contents, of which as a Divine Revelation, he was a firm believer, he derived his support and confidence in all the adversities of this life, and his hope of happiness in the life to come. He continued his attachment to the Latin and Greek classics, which he read in the original, to the last hour of his life. He had been perusing Tully's Offices the morning before his decease, sitting in his chair. A short time before he expired, with his consent, he was placed on a bed in a sitting posture. In that situation he continued to read Cicero for a short time, when his attendants casting their eyes upon him, found he was dead, but still holding his book in his hand. This event occurred on the 15th of February, 1820, in the ninety-third year of his age.

He was worthy of the memorable age in which he lived, and of being associated with the venerable patriots with whom he acted. And the part which he performed was worthy of this character, as a patriot and a Christian.

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## CONNECTICUT.

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### ROGER SHERMAN,

In a free nation, where the pathway to the highest offices and the most honorable employments, is open to every aspirant, in which there are no legal obstructions to the advancement of the poor more than the rich, it is sometimes the

fact, that individual enterprise, and persevering industry, achieve for the children of parents in humble life, and limited property, what the sons of the affluent, accomodated with every facility, but wanting enterprise and application, are never able to attain. ) Instances have existed, and instances do now exist in the United States, in which this remark has been verified ; and since the way is equally open to all, and the prize is placed in clear view before them, as a sure reward to all who reach the goal, it may be reasonably expected, that many more will hereafter have it verified, as a reward for their honorable exertions.

The most distinguished and the most useful men, do not always lay the foundation of their fame, and honorable distinction, in the classical halls and lecture rooms of an university.

( Probably there have been but few instances, in which the preceding remarks have been more literally illustrated and verified, than in the one now under consideration.

Roger Sherman's ancestor, his great grandfather, John Sherman, came to America, from Dedham, England, and settled at Watertown, Massachusetts, in the year 1635. William Sherman, the grandson of John, and the father of Roger, lived at Newton in Massachusetts, where he cultivated his small farm, and thus obtained support for his family by honest industry, until 1723, two years after the birth of his son Roger. This took place in Newton in 1721, on the 19th day of April. In 1723, the family removed to Stoughton, in that state. There his father continued his residence until his death in 1741, when the support of the family and the superintendence of its concerns, devolved on Roger ; who was the second son of his parents. His elder brother had previously removed to Connecticut, and settled in New Milford in the county of Litchfield. Roger, at the time of his father's decease, was but nineteen years old. He had enjoyed no other means for obtaining an education, than such as the country common schools at that time afforded ; and these were extremely limited, as is well known by all who are acquainted with the state of the country, for a considerable period subsequent to that date.

His father's family was numerous ; and being in humble life and moderate circumstances, Roger was apprenticed to a shoemaker.

He continued to reside with his mother's family about three years after his father's decease, and was employed princi-



pally in cultivating the farm, and otherwise in providing for the bereaved family. About that time it was judged expedient to change their residence, and remove to a distance. The property which they owned in Newton, was disposed of, and the family removed to New Milford in Connecticut, in 1743. Mr. Sherman made the journey on foot, carrying his tools with him, from Massachusetts to their new place of residence. There he continued to work at his trade with industry for some time. He then commenced business as a merchant, in company with his elder brother, who had established himself in that town some years before.

While he was engaged in learning his trade, he availed himself of all the means he could command, for improving his mind by reading. It is reported of him, that while at work on his bench, he had a book placed in such a position, that he could read all the time when his eyes were not necessarily fixed on his work. In this manner he acquired information, under such circumstances as none would have thought of improving in that way, except one whose desire for obtaining knowledge was unconquerable. By thus employing all the means in his power, with an untiring perseverance, he made himself well acquainted with the principles of mathematics. And as early as 1748, he made astronomical calculations for an almanac that was published in New York during several years. These facts show his ardent desire for acquiring knowledge generally, since they were sciences quite beyond the ordinary range of his reading, and in no way connected with his regular pursuits. Stimulated by the same eager desire for mental improvement, and having to encounter all the disadvantages of his defective education, he applied himself to the study of law. Whether he did this simply for his own intellectual gratification, or whether he looked forward to admission to the bar, as a practising lawyer, is not known. But it is most probable it was only the former, and that his rising to distinction as a practising attorney and counsellor, and to high eminence as a judge of the highest court in the state, were results of his persevering application without the aid of an instructor, which were not even contemplated at the time when he commenced the study of law. While he was thus employed in business and study, he acquired such a favorable reputation as a lawyer among his surrounding friends, that they persuaded him to apply for a regular admission to the bar. He applied, and was admitted an attorney at law, in December, 1754. Two years after

his settlement in New Milford, he was appointed a county surveyor for the county in which he resided. We not unfrequently see young men possessed of aspiring minds, with only a limited preparatory education, commence and pursue the study of law, under a qualified preceptor, and by enterprise and a persevering application to the business, rise to distinction, and obtain extensive and lucrative employment in the profession. (But for one with no director but himself, with no library but such as he could borrow, to rise from deep obscurity to high eminence as a jurist, is indeed a rare occurrence. Such, however, was the highly honorable distinction acquired by Roger Sherman.) His success, which attracted to him, during his succeeding years, such signal honors, did not inflate him with vanity and self-sufficiency; neither did he manifest pride and superiority in his own esteem of himself. (Roger Sherman was a humble Christian, and he cultivated the talents with which his Creator had endowed him, with a conscientious desire of being useful; and few men, under any variety of advantages, have succeeded to a greater extent, or sustained their acquired honors with a greater degree of meekness, and a more exemplary uprightness of character.)

In 1755, Mr. Sherman was chosen a representative for New Milford to the general assembly of Connecticut, and the same year he was commissioned as a justice of the peace. He was successively returned a representative from year to year, during almost the whole time he continued to reside in New Milford. This may be considered the commencement of his political life. It was when he was thirty-three years of age.

(A summary retrospect will show us the following facts. At nineteen years of age he lost his father. He was, at that age, left with the charge of providing for his widowed mother, and a large family of younger children. Without education, an apprentice to a humble mechanical business, prosecuting his trade till he was twenty-two years old, then placed as a partner in a country store, acting as a county surveyor, without assistance from any qualified instructor, and with no library but such as he casually obtained—he had become a regularly admitted practising lawyer, a civil magistrate, and a representative to the general assembly of the colony of Connecticut. This summary account exhibits the honorable results of enterprise, industry, and perseverance rarely equalled.)

After a regular practice of the law about five years, he was appointed a judge of the county court for Litchfield county, in May, 1759. In 1761 he removed from New Milford to New Haven. The same appointments were soon conferred on him in the county to which he had removed with those he had previously held. He was commissioned as a magistrate, appointed a judge of the county court, and often represented the town in the general assembly. He was also chosen treasurer of Yale College, which office he held many years, and received from that seminary the honorary degree of A. M. in 1765.

In the year following the freemen of the colony elected him an assistant. [In other words, a member of the upper house of the legislative body—another name for senate.]

Mr. Sherman was an observer of the measures contemplated by the British ministry, for asserting and establishing the right of parliament to tax the colonists for the purpose of raising revenue, to be disposed of by their authority, to the exclusion of the voice of the colonists. These attempts were commenced and laid aside, received and abandoned, several times, by the ministers, between the termination of the French war, and the passing of the celebrated "Stamp act," which decided the colonists in their opposition to the arbitrary measures of the British government. He steadily watched all their motions and projects for establishing their claim, and as steadily and uniformly, opposed all acknowledgment of their right. It was at a period when this great principle, which caused much discussion in public, and agitated the whole community, that he was brought forward into public life, to take a leading part in the politics of his country. He was well prepared for performing the part assigned him. He had examined with great caution; he deliberated with calmness and discretion; and, when he decided, it was done for the best of reasons. Rectitude of purpose, unbending integrity, and decision of character were uniformly exhibited by Mr. Sherman, through his whole life. He had been accustomed to encounter and overcome embarrassments in the pursuits of private life; and when, as a public man, formidable obstacles were presented in his path of duty, he was not disposed to yield without an effort to surmount them. Few men, of any age, ever possessed more entirely the confidence of their fellow citizens, than Roger Sherman; and few men ever improved it for the general good with a more uniform approbation of their fellow men.

In the month of May, 1776, he received an appointment to the office of a judge of the highest court of Connecticut. This office, which was an annual appointment, and made by the legislature, he held, in connection with his seat as a member of the council, for nineteen years; when a law being passed rendering it incompatible to sustain both, he resigned his seat at the council board, and retained that on the bench; where he remained until 1789, when he was elected a member of the first congress under the federal constitution.

It cannot be expected that a particular detail can be given, in a summary biographical sketch like this, of every public employment in which Mr. Sherman was engaged. It will therefore, be briefly remarked, in this place, that he zealously engaged in the long continued controversy between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, respecting the Susquehannah purchase, in behalf of the Susquehannah company. It caused great commotion in the colonies respectively claiming the right to the disputed territory; and, for several years, kept Connecticut divided into parties, which mutually indulged feelings of great animosity. But, although ridicule, satire, and criminations were made use of by both parties, Mr. Sherman pursued the straight forward course of integrity; and by his influence, contributed much more toward quieting and pacifying the opposing parties in that state, than could have been effected by all other means, short of a legal decision. Such was the state of the times, that could not then be obtained.

But to return from this digression. As the time approached, when it was deemed necessary, in the several colonies, to concert some united system for more effectually opposing the encroachments of the British government, on the rights and liberty of the colonists, the people naturally sought for men to manage their interests, who were wise, able, faithful, and of undoubted patriotism. In Connecticut, Roger Sherman, Joseph Trumbull, Eliphalet Dyer, and Silas Deane, Esquires, were nominated by the committee of correspondence, to attend the general congress of the colonies, to consult and advise concerning their good. Mr. Sherman was present on opening the first congress in 1774, and in July, 1776, set his name to the Declaration of Independence. He also held a seat in one or the other house, from the formation of the government under the new constitution in 1789 until his death in 1793.

The reputation he acquired, both as a representative and a senator in congress, was such as gave him an extensive in-

fluence in those most respectable bodies. Few men were sent to congress from any colony or state, whose judgment and opinions were more sought for, or held in higher esteem. He sought not after the splendor of eloquence. He did not affect the external suavity and polish of the *gentleman*. Indeed, he affected nothing. He always appeared exactly what he was—a man of sound common sense; strong natural powers of mind; of deep thought; of much reflexion; of deliberate judgment; and a steady integrity—uniformly seeking to promote the cause of righteousness in the most upright manner. His personal appearance was venerable; his manners plain and simple, and his whole character so entirely consistent in all respects, that he possessed the respect, esteem, and confidence of his associates, both in public and private life, to an extent rarely equalled in any age or country.

It has been stated, that he was present on the opening of the first continental congress. The confidence reposed in him by the members of congress, put in requisition his services for arranging and reporting on a large share of the important business referred to committees, to be subsequently discussed, and decided upon by congress, in that critical and ominous period, in which the vital interests of all the colonies were in jeopardy. It is not easy for any one, who did not live in that period of agitation and perplexity, to form an adequate estimate of the great responsibility, which devolved on congress, individually and collectively, at the time under consideration; and, perhaps no collection of men were ever associated, who were more competent to the purposes for which they were selected, than the American congress; to whom were committed the interests and concerns of their nation, then just springing into life. To be one of the first among such an association, affords no equivocal evidence of honorable distinction, and personal worth. Such was the acknowledged merit of Roger Sherman, and such the station assigned to him by his distinguished patriotic associates; and it will be remembered to his high honor, that he attained to this by his own persevering efforts, almost unaided by others, from the humble station of a shoe maker, without wealth or education.

It would be a task, which the limits of this work do not admit, to mention in detail, all the important committees, on which he was placed by the congress in 1775, and 1776. But it would be **stly** deemed improper to omit to mention,

that he was selected, with his distinguished colleagues, to prepare a Declaration of Independence. Perhaps in no instance was the confidence of congress in the talents of Mr. Sherman more honorably manifested than in this appointment.

Mr. Sherman was a standing member of the board of war and ordnance, of the marine committee, and of the board of the treasury. These were not incidental, like many of the committees raised for temporary objects. But they had assigned to them the superintendence of the vital and most important interests of the country, situated as it then was, engaged in a war with a powerful nation, and but very poorly provided, in almost every respect, with requisite means for prosecuting it successfully.

His employments in congress were of a very active kind, and they were incessant. But notwithstanding this, he was during the war a member of the council of safety, in Connecticut; and when New Haven was incorporated with city privileges, he was elected to the office of mayor; which office he sustained till the close of his life.

In 1783, the legislature of Connecticut appointed him, together with the honorable Judge Law, of New London, a committee, to revise the statutes—to reduce all those which related to the same subject into one; to arrange them in a regular order, and suggest such alterations as they should judge expedient; and to submit their report to the general assembly. In their performance of this difficult and arduous service, they received the general approbation of the state.

When in 1787 it was resolved to call a convention of the several states, to form a constitution of government for the United States, Mr. Sherman, the late Judge Ellsworth, and the no less distinguished Doctor Johnson, were appointed delegates, to represent Connecticut in that august and venerable assembly of patriotic sages. In the convention, Mr. Sherman manifested his usual wisdom and sagacity, and had an important influence in moderating conflicting spirits, and soothing the feelings of vehement partizans; and he contributed, perhaps as much as any one member, to framing and maturing the federal constitution of government of the United States, under which, for forty years, the people of this country have enjoyed as much real liberty, and experienced as great a degree of prosperity, as were ever allotted to any other people, during equal number of years, since nations have existed.

When the convention had performed their duty, and the constitution which they had formed, was proposed to the

people of the several states, for their examination, and adoption, Mr. Sherman was present in the Connecticut convention, to which it was submitted. He there used his great influence with much success, in behalf of its adoption on the part of Connecticut. He was returned a representative from that state, to the first congress which met under the constitution; in the forming of which he had so important a share. After holding his seat in the house of representatives two years, he was promoted to the senate; in which body he continued to exert his useful talents, for the benefit of his country, whose independence he had proclaimed fifteen years before, and which he had uniformly labored to promote, from the moment it was declared, to the close of his virtuous and useful life. This event occurred on the twenty-third day of July, 1793.

During his life, he had sustained many offices of importance, with uniform honor, and an untarnished reputation. His death, although it occurred when he had passed his seventy-second year, was felt to be a great loss, as extensively as he was known. Although he was gathered to his fathers in a ripe old age, fully possessed of all his honors, which he had acquired by nearly a half a century of active usefulness, he was yet in full possession of his mental powers unbroken; and would probably have been capable of eminent usefulness for several successive years, had his life been thus continued. His loss, though deeply felt, and sincerely mourned by the country; by the people of Connecticut, and by the citizens of New Haven, generally, whose chief magistrate he had been from its city incorporation; yet, by none was it more sincerely lamented than the society and church, of which he was an eminent and useful member.

Mr. Sherman was twice married. At the age of twenty-eight years, he was first married to Miss Elizabeth Hartwell of Stoughton, in Massachusetts, for several years the place of his father's residence. By her he had seven children. After her decease in 1760, and subsequent to his removal to New Haven, he married Miss Rebecca Prescott of Danvers, also in Massachusetts. By this second marriage he had eight children.

It would require more room than can be appropriated, in this sketch, to exhibit the character of this truly great man, as it merits. It will therefore be closed with the summary, yet comprehensive inscription, recorded on the tablet that covers his tomb.

In memory of the  
**HONORABLE ROGER SHERMAN, ESQ.**

Mayor of the city of New Haven, and Senator  
of the United States.

He was born at Newtown, in Massachusetts, April 19, 1721,  
And died in New Haven, July 23d. A. D. 1793,  
Aged LXXII.

Possessed of a strong, clear, penetrating mind, and singular  
perseverance,

He became the self-taught scholar, eminent for  
jurisprudence and policy.

He was nineteen years an assistant, and twenty-three years  
a Judge of the Superior Court, in high reputation.

He was a delegate in the first Congress, signed the glorious  
act of Independence, and many years displayed  
superior talents and ability in the  
National Legislature.

He was a member of the General Convention, approved the  
Federal Constitution, and served his country with  
fidelity and honor in the House of Representatives,  
and in the Senate of the United States.

He was a man of approved integrity, a cool discerning  
Judge, a prudent sagacious politician, a true,  
faithful, and firm patriot.

He ever adorned the profession of Christianity which he  
made in youth, and distinguished through life for public  
usefulness; died in prospect of a blessed immortality.



**SAMUEL HUNTINGTON.**

**SAMUEL HUNTINGTON** was descended from a family, which  
at an early period of its settlement, arrived at Saybrook, in  
Connecticut. Like most of those families, which left their  
native land to avoid ecclesiastical and civil oppression, his an-  
cestors came to America to enjoy the right of worshipping  
God, according to what they conscientiously believed was  
agreeable to His revealed will. This family was much re-  
spected for piety and intelligence. He was the eldest son of  
Nathaniel Huntington, who settled at Windham in Connecti-  
cut, and industriously pursued the business of a farmer. He



was blessed with the inestimable privilege of having a pious and intelligent mother. As it was the intention of his father, that his oldest son should inherit his patrimony, he gave him no other means and advantages for obtaining an education, than the common schools of Connecticut at that early period supplied; and these, limited as they were, were deemed adequate to the object in view. Prompted, however, by the native vigor of his own mind, and perhaps, by the distinction which his brothers derived from the advantages of a collegiate education, he was not contented to remain in the obscurity of a practical farmer, however respectable the business of an agriculturist was justly esteemed. Being possessed of a strong mind, and having a relish for mental cultivation, he devoted much of that portion of his time which was not occupied in his agricultural pursuits, in reading and study. In this manner he divided his time between labor and his books, until he was twenty-two years of age. Notwithstanding the obstacles which were to be surmounted in his situation, his decision of character and persevering efforts enabled him to surmount them, and achieve the object he sought; so that at the age of twenty-two, he had acquired quite a respectable stock of scientific information.

He then relinquished his agricultural pursuits, and commenced the study of law. Being conscious that such an acquaintance with the Latin language, as would enable him to comprehend many passages contained in law books, was indispensable, he acquainted himself with that language sufficiently for that purpose.

Actuated by the laudable ambition of rising to distinction in society, and of obtaining a competence by other means than labor, he began the study of law in a manner very similar to that pursued by his colleague, Sherman, in a distant part of Connecticut. He had not the advantages of instruction by a regular practitioner at the bar. He borrowed books from a member of the profession in Windham county, who obligingly furnished him with those necessary to his pursuits. Although this method of studying was attended with difficulties of considerable magnitude, they were all obviated and overcome by his perseverance and fortitude.

Being deemed qualified, he commenced his career as a practising lawyer in Windham, his native town. At the age of twenty-eight years, when his reputation was extending, he removed from Windham to Norwich, a half-shire town in New London county, where he became more extensively

known; and his success in business, and his celebrity as a man of talents, made rapid advances. Even at that early period, after commencing his business, few lawyers obtained a more extensive practice, or possessed a higher reputation among their fellow citizens. Although it may be admitted that the opportunities for becoming learned in the science, at the time when Mr. Huntington was engaged in business, were comparatively small; it must also be admitted, that they had in general an equal bearing on him as on others. It is, therefore, no equivocal evidence in favor of his faithful improvement of them, and his assiduous application, as well as of his superior talents, that he was early appointed king's attorney for the county in which he resided. His extensive practice, which was the result of a general confidence in his good sense, intelligence, and probity, embraced all of the most important causes in his native county and in those adjoining.

Four years after his removal to Norwich, he was chosen to represent that town in the general assembly of Connecticut. This was the beginning of his political life. Ten years from that date, he was appointed an associate judge of the superior court of the colony. And the next year, he was elected a member of the council. Thus, in Connecticut, it is but another name for senate.

On the second Thursday of October, in 1775, he was appointed a delegate to congress, in connection with Roger Sherman, Oliver Wolcott, Titus Hosmer, and William Williams, Esquires. Having in obedience to this call of his fellow citizens, taken his seat in that assembly, in January, he was present in July following, and was called upon to sign his name to the Declaration of Independence. He was a member of congress during that and the three following years. In that whole period, the most ominous which the country ever experienced, he was busily employed in the business of the public, and rendered services to his fellow citizens of the highest importance. His stern integrity, and unbending patriotism, his sound judgment, and active discharge of business, rendered him conspicuous and attracted his full share of employment, as a member of many important committees. So high was his reputation in the estimation of congress, that in 1779, he was appointed president of that body; which was at that time the first office in the nation. In that office he succeeded Governor Jay, who had received and accepted the appointment of minister ple-

nipotentiary to the court of Spain. He was again appointed to the same place in 1780. This station he held, and performed its arduous duties with universal approbation, until the following year; when in consequence of impaired health and being worn down by the fatigues of his unremitting application to the duties of his office, he desired leave of absence, that he might by a relaxation from business recruit his impaired constitution. By reason of a reluctance to dispense with his services, congress forbore to nominate his successor for two months. In consequence, however, of his renewed application, made in a way still more pressing and urgent, they acceded to it, and chose a new president. In a few days after his departure, they passed a vote of thanks to him, "in testimony of their approbation of his conduct in the chair, and in the execution of public business."

On his return to Connecticut, he resumed his seat at the council board, and on the bench; both of which had been continued vacant during his absence in congress. This may be justly viewed as a signal evidence of the respect and esteem which his constituents entertained for him; and these were farther evinced by the subsequent promotions which he experienced.

In the spring of 1782, he was elected a delegate to congress. But for reasons which he deemed imperative, he did not attend under that appointment. His health not being fully re-established, and his duties as a member of the highest court in the state, he viewed a sufficient justification of his absence. In the following year, however, having been again elected, he took his seat in congress, soon after they had removed to Princeton, in New Jersey, in consequence of a tumult that occurred in Philadelphia. He retained his seat till the following November, when he retired finally from congress. But, although he had withdrawn himself from that august assembly, where his public services had been so important, and where he had received the first honors which his country could confer on him; yet his fellow citizens held a demand for his talents to be further employed in their service. Soon after his return to his native state he was appointed chief justice of the superior court of Connecticut. Having held this office one year, he was chosen lieutenant governor of the state; and, in 1786, he was chosen governor, as successor to Governor Griswold. To this office he was annually re-chosen, with great unanimity, till his death.

This event happened at Norwich, on the fifth day of January, 1796, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

Governor Huntington was for many years, a professor of religion. In the sickness which terminated his life, he realized the consolation which a strong confidence in the faithfulness of his Saviour, in whom he put his trust, was calculated to inspire. He was a devout attendant on public worship, and appeared uniformly in the Divine presence, with the aspect of solemn reverence and sincere devotion. The practice of investigating whatever subjects were presented to his contemplation, which he adopted while yet a youth, produced a habit of deep reflection, which he observed through life. His words were few; and when he delivered his opinions, it was apparent that they were the result of much thinking and thorough deliberation. Notwithstanding the many honors and high distinction which had been conferred on him, he never betrayed any feeling of that conscious superiority, which is wont to spring from an indulgence of false pride. Indeed his modesty, by those not intimately acquainted with him, was frequently mistaken for haughtiness of spirit. But those who knew him intimately, formed a very different and far more correct judgment of his motives. Self-possession was, at all times, a prominent trait of his character; and so cautious was he in his remarks respecting his fellow men, that a competent witness, who resided in his family more than twenty years, bore testimony, that during that whole period, he was not heard to give utterance to one remark that could wound the feelings of another, or injure the reputation of an absent person.

For a considerable time previous to his decease, he suffered severely from a dropsy in the chest. Undoubtedly, this, connected with a complication of infirmities, accelerated the termination of his life.

In retracing the life of Governor Huntington, what an animating and encouraging example does it furnish to the young men of genius and enterprise in our free country? Here is exhibited, in the result of his efforts, what may be accomplished by others who will pursue the same course in similar circumstances. With facilities for obtaining early education, far inferior to those now at the command of youths in Connecticut, he rose, from the condition of a common plough-boy, and by his almost unaided exertions, to great respectability and distinction.

**He rendered services of great utility to his native state and**

country. And, at length attained the most honorable and distinguished offices which his fellow men had in their power to bestow. During his whole progress, his life was irreprouchable; and his death such as became the man of virtue and Christian piety.



### WILLIAM WILLIAMS.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS, who inscribed his name on the Declaration of Independence of the American colonies, was descended from a respectable and pious ancestry, who emigrated from Wales in the year 1630, and settled at Roxbury in the colony of Massachusetts Bay. His grandfather was settled in the gospel ministry at Hatfield, in the county of Hampshire, in Massachusetts. Hatfield lies bordering on the western shore of Connecticut River. His father, the Reverend Solomon Williams, was during more than half a century, pastor of the first congregational society in Lebanon, a pleasant agricultural town in Windham county in Connecticut. In this town Colonel Williams was born, on the 8th day of April, 1731. He was the fourth son of his parents, and one of a family which consisted of eight children; five sons and three daughters. He received his education at Harvard university, which he entered in 1747 when he was sixteen years old; and graduated with honorable distinction in his class in 1751. Soon after he left the university, he commenced a course of theological studies under the direction of his father; which he pursued with assiduity for some time. But in the year 1755, during "the French war," he went with Colonel Ephraim Williams, a relative of his, to Lake George, as one of the staff of his regiment. This brought him into the society of British officers who were employed in that war, and gave him a good opportunity to acquaint himself with, and to form a correct estimate of their characters; and to learn their dispositions towards the inhabitants of the American colonies. At the close of the campaign, the subject of this memoir left the army, and returned to his native town, much disgusted with the British manners and dispositions of the officers, who manifested a great degree of haughtiness, as well as indifference for the interests and welfare of the

colonies. Then and there it was that he imbibed that feeling of opposition to British domination in this country, which after a few years produced the war of the revolution, and strengthened and confirmed that decided patriotic resistance to every encroachment on the rights and liberties of the colonists.

Having returned to his native residence, where he determined to take up his abode for life, he commenced business as a merchant which he pursued until the beginning of the revolutionary war. He early became possessed of the confidence of the inhabitants of the town, both for his capacity and integrity. This they manifested by choosing him town clerk at the age of twenty-five years; and soon after he was chosen one of their representatives to the general assembly of the colony, at a period of life considerably earlier than was customary in that community. Excepting the time he was absent, attending the duties of his appointment as a member of the old congress, he was, during a long life, almost uninterruptedly, a member of one of the branches of the legislature of his native state. He acted as clerk of the general assembly, and afterwards as speaker, for many years. In 1780, he was chosen an assistant, and was annually re-chosen to that body twenty-four successive years; and in 1804, he declined a re-election, resigned all his public offices, excepting that of judge of probate, retired to his family, and devoted himself to the duties of private life.

Punctuality was a strong trait in the character of Colonel Williams. During somewhat more than ninety sessions of the state legislature, which intervened between the beginning and close of his connection with that body, he was seldom absent from his seat; except when he was called to perform his higher duties in congress.

He was a judge of the county court, for Windham county, and a judge of the court of probate for the district of Windham, during the long period of forty years. He was one of the committee of safety during the greatest part of the war. The meetings of that committee were held daily; and business of much interest and importance was continually devolving on them. It may, therefore, be truly said of him, that he devoted his whole life to the service of his fellow citizens, in promoting their welfare and prosperity; and this with conscientious uprightness rarely equalled.

In October, 1775, he was appointed by the general assembly of Connecticut, a delegate to the general congress; this

congress he attended. And on this occasion, he resigned the command of a regiment of militia, to which he had been appointed two years before; justly considering it incompatible to hold two offices, both of which were, at that era, highly important; and the duties of but one of which he could perform.

He was re-elected a delegate to congress in the year following. And this placed him among those who proclaimed the independence of their country; and with them he set his name to the instrument, which is to insure him an unperishing remembrance to future generations.

Among the incidents of his life, it is proper to mention here; that, when the traitor Arnold destroyed New London; on being informed of his invasion, Colonel Williams mounted his horse, and rode the distance of twenty-three miles in three hours; but was not able to reach the scene of destruction, until the mischief was done, and the enemy was ready to embark.

On another occasion, a short time after the battle of Germantown, he saved one of his colleagues, (Colonel Dyer) from being captured by the enemy; and so much exposed was he in the enterprise, that he escaped himself with great difficulty, and much danger, falling into the hands of the enemy.

At the commencement of the revolutionary conflict, Colonel Williams was engaged in the business of a merchant in his native town. At that period, he embarked with ardor in the cause of his country, and closed his mercantile business, and settled up his concerns, that he might experience no embarrassing interruptions from that source; and that he might be able to devote his whole time and all his exertions to his country's service.

In summing up the character of Colonel Williams, it will be proper to look to the basis on which the whole superstructure was raised and compacted. This basis was a firm unwavering belief in the Bible as a divine revelation to men. His faith in this was in conformity to the sentiments of the Puritans who first landed at Plymouth, and in accordance with leading doctrines of the great reformers; usually denominated "the doctrines of grace."

At a time during the war, when the continental currency would not procure those services which the necessities of the country demanded, Colonel Williams was in possession of about two thousand dollars in specie. This he exchanged

for the paper currency, to promote the public service, and ultimately lost the whole sum.

As an instance of his devotedness to the interest of the public, which will evince his disinterested patriotism, may be mentioned the fact, that when Lawrence's legion was stationed at Lebanon, in the winter of 1781, to accommodate the officers with comfortable quarters, he relinquished his own house to them, and removed his family to another.

He was a member of the state convention which was called to decide on adopting the federal constitution. Although a majority of the people of Lebanon were opposed to adopting it, and although he was an advocate for its adoption; they, notwithstanding, chose him for their delegate; and when there, in opposition to their opinions, he advocated its acceptance by the state. And it was not long before his constituents expressed their gratitude to him for the part he took on that occasion; and convinced of his correctness and their error, after a little time for reflection, they coalesced in the opinion he had expressed on the momentous subject.

In 1772, he was united by marriage to Mary, the second daughter of Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. of Lebanon, who was then governor of Connecticut.

The early death of his oldest son, deeply affected Colonel Williams. That afflicting event occurred in the year 1810, in the month of October. Being now far advanced in age, he never recovered from the shock. His health obviously declined from that time, and after an unbroken silence of four days' continuance, while lying on his bed, he audibly and with a full and clear voice, pronounced the name of his son, and required him to attend on his dying parent. Having, thus spoken in that remarkable manner, he almost instantly expired.

Thus lived, and thus died the Hon. William Williams, of Connecticut, on the 2d day of August, 1811, in the eighty-first year of his age.



## OLIVER WOLCOTT.

THE family bearing the name of Wolcott, was among the early settlers in Connecticut. And there has been no time since their distinguished ancestor, with a few associates, commenced the settlement of Windsor, in that state, when



the name, in some one or more of its branches, has not sustained the reputation of possessing a full share of talents, influence, and respectability. Henry Wolcott, the English ancestor, came from Tolland, in Somersetshire; where he was born in 1578. Having imbibed the principles of the Independents, excited the jealousy of the government, and he determined to leave his native island, and repair to the wilds of America. He first arrived in New England in 1628, and resolving to remove his family, he returned, and brought them with him in 1630. He first settled in Dorchester, in Massachusetts, a short distance from Boston. In 1636, with a few associates, he began the settlement of Windsor. Not only some of his descendants, but those of several of his most distinguished associates, continue to reside in that town to this day.

Henry Wolcott was not only a leading man in the settlement of Windsor, but he was distinguished among the first of those who organized the government of Connecticut, thus comprising the three towns, Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield; and assisted in forming their constitution of government, the principles of which were incorporated in the charter, afterwards granted by Charles II. to the colony of Connecticut. He lived to a good old age, and died in his seventy-eighth year. He was a member of the first general assembly of Connecticut in 1639, and continued a member, or held some office in the magistracy until his death in 1655. From that time to the present, some individuals of the family have almost constantly been members of the assembly, magistrates, judges of courts, or in the executive chair; and have wielded a full share of influence in the state, with much respectability and usefulness.

Oliver Wolcott, a sketch of whose life we are now to give, was the great-grandson of Henry Wolcott, and the youngest son of Roger Wolcott, who, though destitute of the advantages of a public education, rose by his own efforts to high rank and office both civil and military in Connecticut. He was a member of the assembly and of the council. He was a major general, judge of the county court, judge of the superior court, lieutenant governor, and governor of the state successively.

Oliver, his youngest son, was born on the 26th day of November, 1726. He received his education at Yale College, where he graduated in 1747. The same year in which he left college, he received a captain's commission in the army

He immediately raised a company and marched them to the northern frontier, to aid in protecting the border settlements, against the incursions of the Canadian French and hostile savages, until the peace was settled at Aix-la-Chapelle; when the regiment, to which he was attached, was disbanded. He then returned to Connecticut, and soon commenced the study of medicine under the instruction of his brother, Doctor Alexander Wolcott, a distinguished practitioner in Windsor. He, however, did not commence the regular practice of medicine; for about the time when he was contemplating it, the general assembly organized the county of Litchfield, and appointed him the first sheriff of the county.

In 1774, the freemen of Connecticut chose him a member of the council, and his election was annually renewed till 1786. During that term he was chief judge of the county court for Litchfield county, and for many years judge of the court of probate for Litchfield district. In the militia, he rose from a captain regularly to the rank of major general, and served in every intermediate grade of office.

In 1775, congress appointed him one of the commissioners of Indian affairs for the northern department. The object of this commission was, to persuade the Indians to remain neutral in the controversy in which the United States were engaged with the British. It was an agency that required to be conducted with wisdom, caution, and prudence. While Mr. Wolcott was employed in the objects of this appointment, the controversies between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, respecting boundaries, and between New York and Vermont, were in a high state of excitement, and threatened to produce much injury to the American cause, by exposing the people to the seductive arts of British partizans. In settling and composing these jarring elements, and in uniting the citizens of the New England class, who were settled in the controverted territory, to support the common cause, Mr. Wolcott's influence was steadily and successfully exerted. Thus, by the wisdom of those commissioners, was wrested from the grasp of the vigilant British emissaries, one powerful engine which they were anxious to seize and wield with effect, to the great injury of the American interest.

In the beginning of 1776, he attended congress in Philadelphia, and continued there until the Declaration of Independence was adopted, and had recieved his signature; he then returned to Connecticut; and by an appointment of Governor Trumbull and the council of safety, he took com-

mand of a detachment of Connecticut militia, consisting of fourteen regiments, which were ordered for the defence of New York. Having performed this service, and the command having been transferred to other hands, he returned to his home; and after a short time, resumed his seat in congress in the month of November of that year, and retired with that body to Baltimore, in the winter of 1777, at the time when their safety in Philadelphia was menaced by the approach of the British army.

In the summer of this year, he was continually and very assiduously engaged in superintending the raising of recruits; organizing and despatching detachments of militia to aid the general interests of the military service of the United States; and in carrying on an extensive correspondence relative to their military concerns; and after having forwarded several thousands of men to the aid of General Putnam, on the Hudson, he took the command of a body of volunteers, and with them proceeded to join General Gates and the northern army. There, under the command of Gates, he aided in subduing and capturing the British army, under Major General Burgoyne.

After the capture of Burgoyne's army had been achieved, and the alarm of that season was somewhat allayed, by reason of that joyful event, General Wolcott returned to the employments of civil life; and, in February, 1778, he took his seat in congress at Yorktown, and continued with that body till July.

In the summer of 1779, Connecticut was invaded by a British force. He immediately took the command of a division of the Connecticut militia, for the defence of their southern coast, where the inhabitants were imminently exposed to sudden attack. This called for activity and fidelity; and both were promptly rendered by General Wolcott, whose personal vigor, patriotic integrity, and Christian benevolence, admitted of no mediocrity of character or indecision of conduct. He continued to attend to his various duties in his native state; and from 1781 to 1783 he was occasionally engaged in his congressional duties. In 1784 and 1785, he was actively employed as one of the commissioners for Indian affairs in the northern department. His colleagues were Richard Butler and Arthur Lee. They conjointly prescribed the terms of peace with the Six Nations, or Mohawk Indians.

In 1786, he was elected lieutenant governor of Connecticut, and was annually re-elected until 1796. In the spring of this year he was chosen governor of the state, and re-

elected in 1797, and he retained the office till the close of his life. This event occurred in December of that year, and in the seventy-second year of his age.

In the character of Governor Wolcott there was an uniform consistency throughout his life. As a patriot he was intelligent, bold, active, inflexible, and persevering. As a statesman, he was capable, cool, and decided. As a man, he always, and in every situation, exhibited a dignified modesty—never courting popularity, but always improving that portion of favor gratuitously bestowed on him by his fellow citizens, disinterestedly for their good. As a Christian he embraced the orthodox principles of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England. These he adorned by an uniform life of conscientious piety, in a conformity to the precepts of the gospel.

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## NEW YORK.

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### WILLIAM FLOYD.

**WILLIAM FLOYD**, whose name, signed with his own hand, stands on the original Declaration of Independence, was the grandson of a gentleman of respectability, who came to this country from Wales, in the year 1680, and established himself, as an agriculturist, at Setauket, on Long Island, in the colony of New York. He soon acquired considerable distinction among the inhabitants, by reason of his wealth and public spirit. His second son, Nicoll, the father of William, followed the employment of his father, and confined himself principally to the occupations and enjoyments of domestic life. He was removed, by death, at an early age; and left this, his eldest son, to take the superintendance of his patrimonia' estate into his own hands.

He was born on the seventeenth day of December, 1734. His father, who was a wealthy farmer, gave him a liberal education, which he restricted to those branches of learning that were useful, rather than the more scientific and specula-

tive studies. His academic course was hardly closed, before his father's death made it necessary for him to take the oversight of his patrimonial estate.

His sound mind, disciplined and enlightened by education ; his friendly disposition, his kindness, and affability, all united in rendering him popular in the society where he lived, and early in life, designated him as a leading man among his fellow citizens. His fidelity in discharging the duties of the minor offices which they conferred on him, prepared them to promote him to those of more importance ; and thus he was introduced to an acquaintance with many of the distinguished public men in different parts of the province.

The controversy between Great Britain and her American colonies early engaged his attention. As in its progress, it assumed a more serious and threatening aspect, he took a decided stand in opposition, and manifested a patriotic zeal and an increasing ardor, in favor of the cause of the colonies. In this he became early conspicuous. In all his public employments, his conduct had fully justified, in the estimation of the people, the confidence they had reposed in him ; and his zealous and uniform opposition to the usurpations of the British parliament, having rendered him extensively popular, constituted the grounds for his being appointed a delegate to the first continental congress, from New York. In that body, he was associated with statesmen and patriots, who may be said to have given birth to a nation.

The principal measures which immediately demanded the attention of that congress, were, to enlighten the people respecting the controversy in which they were soon to be universally interested, to a degree, as it respected them, unprecedented. To direct their attention to the leading points on which their opposition to the parent government rested ; to rouse the languid, that they might be prepared for action of that decisive character which the crisis demanded ; and to decide and confirm the wavering, that they might not, in the time of trial, be found in the ranks of the enemy ; were the great objects of attention.

It may be questioned whether any deliberative assembly of men, collected, as the first continental congress was, from different provinces, trained up under governments somewhat dissimilar, placed in such a situation, in such trying circumstances, called to act not only for those then living, but for posterity, almost without the lights of experience to guide them, ever evinced more consummate wisdom, prudence, and

sound discretion, than the first American continental congress, which convened in Philadelphia, in 1774.

On his return from the session of the first congress, he learned that Long Island was threatened with an invasion, by a naval force which had collected in Gardiner's Bay, near the east end of the island. He had been appointed to the command of the militia of Suffolk county, previous to his attending in congress; and being informed of the threatened invasion, and that a landing had been effected by them, he assembled the militia, put himself at their head, and promptly marched to the scene of danger to drive them from the island. They had, however, no occasion to try their courage, as the intelligence of their approach had effected the object, without having occasion to expose their lives in action. The information so intimidated the invading force, that they abandoned their design, and returned to their ships.

He was again appointed to congress in 1775, and met with his colleagues early in the session, and continued assiduously employed in the discharge of his momentous duties more than two years. This period embraces the time when the great question of our national independence was divided. On that memorable occasion, General Floyd's heart and hand were in unison with those of his associates.

On the journals of that congress are recorded the numerous committees of which he was a member, and the important services his intelligence and active habits enabled him to render, in promoting the common cause. But it is deemed unnecessary to insert them particularly here; since they were similar to those which have been recorded of others, who were his coadjutors.

Few of those leading patriots, who acted a conspicuous part in opposing the British in the revolutionary conflict, were more exposed to their ravages, or suffered more severely by their depredations, than General Floyd. His estate was on Long Island. It was a fine plantation, well stocked with an abundance of fruit trees of various kinds, and very excellent quality. This, together with large forests of timber and firewood, lying contiguous to the New York market, rendered it of great value. All these, with his splendid mansion house, and the stock on his farm, were exposed to become a prey to his vindictive foes, as soon as they should be able to establish themselves on the island. This event took place during his attendance in congress. The American troops found it necessary to evacuate the island, and the British

took possession. By reason of this event his family were turned out of their house, and exiled from their home and their property. The produce and stock of his estate were seized by the enemy, to furnish provisions for their army; and his mansion house was used as a rendezvous for a party of horse. Thus, for seven years, he derived no benefit from his property, while he and his family were driven from their home, to find safety and shelter in Connecticut. This exposure, though it subjected him to great inconvenience and serious loss of property, as well as much anxiety on account of his family, did not cause any abatement in the ardor of his patriotism, nor call forth regrets for the active part he had taken in opposition to the enemies of his country.

After the Declaration of Independence had been proclaimed, the state of New York, in conformity to the recommendations of congress to the states, called a convention, and formed a constitution of government for the state, as an independent sovereignty. General Floyd was elected a senator in the first legislative body that was convened under that constitution. This election took place while he was yet busily employed, in performing his duty in congress. Very important duties devolved on the first legislature that met, in conformity to the state government. It became necessary for them to organize the new government, and adopt a code of laws, suited to their new condition as a sovereign state. General Floyd was a member of that assembly, and rendered important aid in putting the new system of government in operation. With an exception of some short intervals, he attended and was actively engaged more than a twelvemonth. Nearly two months before he finished his services in the state legislature, he was again elected a delegate to congress. He took his seat in January, 1779, and continued busily engaged in promoting the public interests till the June following, when he obtained leave of absence, and returned to the state of New York, where his services were again demanded in the legislature.

The paper currency had at that time become so much depreciated, that great alarm pervaded the whole community; and loudly called for the adoption of some measure which would check its declining progress; and as far as might be practicable, remedy the evils already incurred. This delicate and difficult subject was referred to a joint committee of the two houses, of which General Floyd was a member from the senate. In his report to that body, which he rendered in

September, are contained those correct financial principles, the application of which soon began to produce a beneficial change; and when he retired from public life, he had the satisfaction of witnessing the happy results, in the truly prosperous condition of the finances of the state. The state had thus been rescued from a condition verging on bankruptcy, and raised to one of prosperity almost unparalleled.

About this time, speculators had begun an extensive practice of purchasing provisions, with a view to a monopoly. They carried it to such an extent, that a famine was threatening the country. It was well known that the public must have provisions for the army, at any price that holders pleased to demand. In these circumstances, a convention of delegates from several states was appointed to meet in New England, to adopt some regulations respecting public supplies. The delegates from New York were William Floyd, John Sloss Hobart, and Ezra L. Hommedieu. To attend that service they were appointed on the 14th day of October, 1779. Three days previous to this appointment, General Floyd was re-elected a delegate to congress; where he took his seat on the second day of December following. By this congress he was appointed a member of two of the most important executive boards then recognized in the government; the treasury and the admiralty. He, however, soon asked permission to be discharged from the treasury board; finding his health too much impaired by his incessant employments, to enable him to attend on the services which both demanded. Indeed, his health had become impaired to such a degree, by his constant employments, as made another recess from public service indispensable. Consequently, on the first of April, 1779, he asked for, and obtained leave of absence. But the demands of the public for his service did not suffer him to enjoy that relaxation from active duties, which the state of his health required. In the month of May following his retirement from congress, the senate of New York was convened; and by their direction their clerk notified him, that his attendance in his place was required without delay. In compliance with that notification he repaired to their place of session, and appeared in his seat. He was immediately placed on a committee, to which was submitted a resolution of congress, which embraced all the most important relations subsisting between congress, as the government of the country, and that of the state. On these relations they were to deliberate, and make their report to the senate. At that session the



question of making bills of credit a legal tender was introduced. This subject had begun to agitate the country, and was justly producing much warmth of feeling. It was urged on the one part, as a necessary expedient, growing out of the existing exigencies of the country. General Floyd, however, strenuously opposed its sanction by the state government, though unsuccessfully. He was fully persuaded that the evils which would result from its adoption, would far more than counterbalance any temporary benefits which could accrue from it to the general government. The correctness of his sentiments on that subject, has long since been settled by the sanction of the whole community.

He was one of those who clearly perceived, and early advocated, the importance of so organizing the general government, as that it should be empowered by other means than requesting and petitioning the several members of the confederacy, to draw on them for their proportion of aid to the common cause, in order that the requisite supplies for the public service should be more promptly rendered. Hence, in the legislature of New York, he reported in favor, and advocated the forming of a confederation of the several states, in order that this indispensable power should be vested in congress.

In April, 1780, he was once more elected a delegate to congress, but he continued his attendance in the state senate till the autumn following, and took his seat in congress in December. In this session he was much occupied on two subjects of great interest to the state of New York; one was the cession of the western territory to the general government, and fixing the western limits of the state; the other, the controversy with New Hampshire, respecting their mutual claim to that territory which is now the state of Vermont. He was successively chosen to represent the state in congress till 1783, when peace having taken place, the independence of his country acknowledged by Great Britain, and the country conducted safely through that long and arduous struggle, by which their freedom had been achieved, he joyfully returned with his family to his own house, after an exile of seven years; and his return to reside with them, in peace and tranquillity, was hailed with numerous demonstrations of the pleasure which the event occasioned.

As might have been expected, when he re-occupied his estate, he found it in a state of dilapidation, and almost ruined. Having taken such a conspicuous stand in support of the cause of his country's independence, and having been so

prominent an actor in opposition to the British domination, he was marked by the tories as an object of especial vengeance; and his property, wherever it was accessible, as legitimate plunder. Hence, the naked soil was almost the only thing that remained without marks of destruction. In consequence of the state of his private affairs he declined a re-election to congress; but continued to serve his native state in their senate till 1788.

Upon the adoption of the federal constitution, when the general government was to be new organized, he was returned a member of the first congress, which was convened in the city of New York, on the fourth day of March, 1789. Having served during that congress, he declined being again a candidate for the office.

The very numerous instances of popular favor which were conferred on General Floyd, during a term of more than half a century, will indicate, with sufficient clearness, the estimation in which he was held by his constituents; and the uprightness and integrity with which he discharged the duties assigned him, are evinced by their long continued approbation.

In 1784, he purchased a tract of land on the Mohawk River. It was then in a state of nature, without inhabitants, and without culture. As he was now freed from public demands on his time, he undertook to improve it; and in a few years, transformed it from a wilderness into a number of flourishing and productive farms. As the western part of this state had already begun to attract the attention of settlers, the beauty of the country, and the productiveness of the soil induced him to transfer his residence thither in 1803, at the age of sixty-nine.

In 1800, he was appointed an elector of president and vice president of the United States. In the year following he was chosen a delegate to the convention that was called for revising the constitution of New York. He served after this repeatedly as a presidential elector—the last time the year before his death. Subsequently he was chosen to the senate of that state. With some few exceptions, he had enjoyed sound health, till a short period previous to his decease. His mental powers seemed to have retained their pristine vigor to the close of his life. That event occurred on the fourth day of August, 1821, and at the age of eighty-seven years.

His life was long, active, and useful to the public. He was a man of business, rather than a debating politician.

Having once formed his opinions, he set himself about accomplishing his purposes ; and often encountered and surmounted obstacles, where men of less decision of character would have yielded, and given over the pursuit, as a hopeless enterprise. His patriotism was undeviating ; his integrity inflexible ; and his name, inscribed on the national charter, will descend to posterity, in connection with others, as one of the veterans who contributed to establish that independence of the United States, which they so magnanimously asserted and proclaimed to the world.



### PHILIP LIVINGSTON.

PHILIP LIVINGSTON was descended from a respectable ancestry, and his family name has long been distinguished in New York. His grandfather, John Livingston, was a minister of the gospel in the Scotch church, who lived an exemplary life, and in a manner consistent with his public character. In 1663, he left Scotland, and emigrated to Rotterdam. There he ended his life and ministry in 1672. Robert Livingston, his son, soon after his father's decease, came to America, and obtained a grant of the manor of Livingston, in what was then the colony of New York. He had three sons, of whom Philip was the oldest ; and was consequently heir to the manor. His brother Robert was grandfather of Chancellor Livingston, and his youngest brother Gilbert, was grandfather of the Reverend Doctor John Livingston, late president of Rutgers' College, at New Brunswick, N. Jersey, now deceased. Philip, the subject of this memoir, was the fourth son of his father, to whom he gave his own name. He was born in Albany, on the fifteenth day of January, 1716.

At the time when his preparatory education was sufficiently advanced for him to become a member of a college, there were no flourishing schools of a high order existing in the province of New York ; and those intended for the elementary instruction were few and inferior.

To obtain the advantages of a collegiate education the father of Mr. Livingston sent him to Yale College, at New Haven, in Connecticut, where he graduated in 1737.

Soon after he returned from college he engaged in commerce, and was soon concerned in extensive business. His views were comprehensive; and an established character for integrity, sagacious management, and uprightness in his dealings, laid a foundation for prosperity, which was amply realized in the success that attended his enterprise. He established himself in the city of New York; and in 1754, when the city contained less than eleven thousand souls, he was elected an alderman of the east ward of the city. This was his commencement in public life. To that office he was annually re-elected for nine successive years; and he performed the duties which his office required to the universal approbation of his constituents.

Sir Charles Hardy, governor of the colony of New York, having been appointed a rear admiral in the navy, resigned his office, and the government devolved on Lieutenant Governor Delancey. On the occurrence of this change in the administration, he dissolved the general assembly of the colony, and a new election of members was consequently made. Although the compensation of the members was at that time a mere trifle, their elections were contested with a zeal and in a manner very similar to the choice of members of parliament in England. To that assembly he and one of his brothers were members. The population of the whole colony was about 100,000.

The meeting of that assembly was during what is well known in this country by "the French war." Mr. Livingston's superior education, and activity as a man of business, rendered him conspicuous among his colleagues, and made him a leading member of the house. Much of the important business which that assembly had to act upon related to the war operations in the north. Mr. Livingston was forward in devising and maturing those measures, which, in conjunction with the efforts of the other colonial governments and the mother country, resulted in the capture of Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Niagara, and Quebec, and shortly after in the subjugation of the whole of Canada.

Previously to the revolution, each of the American colonies had its agent in Great Britain, who was employed to pay particular attention to their interests in the parliament. Robert Charles, Esq. had been an agent for the province of New York. On his decease, the renowned Edmund Burke was employed to fill that office. A special committee was appointed, as a standing body, to hold correspondence with

their agent ; and Mr. Livingston being on that committee at the time of Mr. Burke's engagement, he was in constant correspondence with him. It is supposed that this correspondence of Mr. Livingston, was one principal source from whence Mr. Burke derived his enlightened and correct views of the policy which he so strenuously supported in favor of the Americans in opposition to the ministry. Mr. Livingston early imbibed principles of determined resistance to all the measures of hostility against the rights of the Americans, which ministers attempted, insidiously and by circumvention, to enforce. In this respect he anticipated most of the public men in that province. This remark is confirmed by a reported answer to the speech of the acting governor, Colden, on whom, as president of the council, the administration devolved, on the decease of the lieutenant governor. The reported answer was rendered in 1784, after Mr. Colden had been appointed lieutenant governor of New York. It was drawn up by Mr. Livingston, and breathed sentiments much more consonant with the spirit that had then begun to operate in Fanueil Hall, than the government house of New York. From those sentiments he never swerved ; but boldly, and with an animating eloquence, sustained them in the provincial assemblies, and in the continental congress, to the close of his honorable life. With him were associated George Clinton, Pierre Van Cortland, General Philip Schuyler, Abraham Ten Broeck, Charles De Witt, and Henry Wisner. These men, of whom the mention of their names is sufficient, placed Philip Livingston as their leader, and they enlisted under his banner. They were all members of the general assembly that was elected when Sir Henry Moore was governor, to succeed one which he had dissolved, on his accession to the office.

When the assembly met in October, 1768, Mr. Livingston was chosen speaker by twenty members, when the house consisted, if all were present, of but twenty-seven. This fact will show how great was the comparative strength of the whig party in the assembly at that period. But this subsequently was so diminished, that the governor could command a majority who were subservient to his views and purposes, during several years. From that time he did not take a seat in the provincial assembly.

He was chosen a member of the first congress that met, September 5th, in Philadelphia, in 1774. He was appointed on a committee, to prepare an address to the people of Great Britain.

The spirit of opposition having now risen to a height that precluded all hope and prospect of a compromise, while the assembly contained a majority who were creatures of the royal governor, the counties of New York, Albany, Dutchess, Ulster, Orange, Westchester, Kings, and Suffolk, united in choosing deputies to a provincial convention, which was held at New York, in April, 1775. That convention appointed Philip Livingston, George Clinton, James Duane, John Alsop, Simon Boerum, William Floyd, John Jay, Henry Wisner, Philip Schuyler, Lewis Morris, Francis Lewis, and Robert R. Livingston, delegates to the congress, which had adjourned on the 26th of October preceding, to meet again in May, 1775.

The convention authorized any five of these delegates, to act for them; and gave them full powers to concert with delegates from other colonies, and determine upon and adopt such measures, as should be deemed most effectual for a restoration of the rights of Americans, for securing their preservation in future, and for restoring harmony with Great Britain.

It was this congress which declared the independence of the United States; and Mr. Livingston, with his colleagues, William Floyd, Francis Lewis, and Lewis Morris, was present to subscribe his name to the much admired and memorable state paper. On the ninth of the same month, their act received the unanimous sanction of the convention of New York, then in session at White Plains.

On the 15th day of the month, which gave birth to the American nation, congress appointed Mr. Livingston a member of the treasury board; and of the marine committee in the following April.

The American Independence having been declared and proclaimed, congress recommended to the several states to adopt each a government for itself, that their acts might have the sanction of laws, by authority derived from the people. In compliance with that recommendation, a new government was formed by a convention of delegates, chosen by the people of New York; and after it had been adopted by the people, Mr. Livingston was chosen a senator under it. That was the *first senate* of the *state of New York*. Their first meeting was on the 10th day of September, 1777, and on the 2d of October following, he, James Duane, Francis Lewis, William Duer, and Gouverneur Morris, were elected the first delegates to congress by authority of the state government.

In 1778, at the most gloomy period of the contest, after the British had obtained possession of Philadelphia, con

gress had to retreat to York, in Pennsylvania for their own safety. Their situation was most critical and disheartening. Mr. Livingston, then in poor health and quite feeble, in compliance with a request of the state government, consented to leave his family, and take his seat in congress.

In view of his precarious state of health, he had a presentiment that he should not return; and under that impression, previous to taking his departure, he visited his friends in Albany for the last time. On his return to his family, (then in Kingston) he addressed to them a valedictory letter, expressing his belief that he should not see them any more. The same opinion, in reference to his own family, he expressed, when prepared for his journey to congress; and, on taking his departure, he bade them a final farewell. This took place in May, 1778; and on the 12th of June following, the melancholy event, so truly anticipated by him, and so ardently deprecated by his family and friends, was realized. He had labored under a dropsy in the chest, for a considerable time; and well assured of the fatal termination of that disease, he would have chosen to remain in the quiet of domestic life, and to have yielded up his life in the midst of his family. But his duty called him to leave them, for the benefit of his country; and a call of duty was imperative with him. Thus, as he anticipated, death met him at a distance from home, deprived of the consolations and the society of all his family, except his son Henry, then but eighteen years of age. This youth was then residing in the family of General Washington. On being informed of his father's illness, he immediately repaired to him, to perform for him the last duties which were prompted by filial piety and affection.

When intelligence of his decease was announced to congress, they immediately took the necessary measures for having his funeral obsequies attended with such testimonials of respect, as became the occasion; and put on the usual badge of mourning, to be worn by them during the term of one month.

Thus terminated the life of Philip Livingston, one of the fathers of the American republic; a life usefully and patriotically devoted to the good of his fellow men, with untarnished honor to himself, and extensive usefulness to his country; and what reflected a peculiar lustre over his character was, he was a Christian. He honored its institutions in his life; and left the world with a joyful anticipation of those inestimable

blessings in the life to come, which the gospel assures to every true believer.

He was a liberal patron of several institutions for public benefit. He, and several associates of a kindred spirit, about the middle of the eighteenth century, were accustomed to hold weekly meetings of a social and friendly nature, in the city of New York. At one of those meetings the plan of a public library was suggested. It was promptly adopted, and carried into execution ; this was the beginning of what is now the New York city library ; and his name is mentioned in the act of incorporation, as one of those who set on foot a subscription for its establishment.

He was one of the first governors of the New York hospital, which received a charter in 1771. He was also, one of the founders of the chamber of commerce ; and he actively promoted the establishment of what was then called " Kings," (but now Columbia College.) He took much pleasure in promoting commerce, and agriculture, as the then leading, and most sure sources of the country's wealth and prosperity.

His patriotism was pure, ardent, and undeviating. Evidence of this has already been furnished, in the progress of this sketch ; another may be added with propriety. Indeed it is too honorable to his character to be withheld. A short time previous to his death, and with a full presentiment of the approach of that event, he sold a part of his property, to help sustain the public credit, which was then much depressed, and in a suffering condition.



### FRANCIS LEWIS.

FRANCIS LEWIS, whose life was chequered with many incidents, was a native of the island of Great Britain, born in the principality of Wales in 1713, in the town of Landaff. His father was a minister of the episcopal church in that town. His mother was the daughter of another clergyman of the same standing and profession in North Wales. Francis was the only child of his parents ; and he was deprived of them by death, when he was but four or five years old. Being thus left at that early age an orphan, he was taken by a maternal aunt, who was unmarried, and who took the best possi-



ble care of him in her power. She took pains to have him taught fully to understand his native language; and he also learned the Gaelic tongue in Scotland, whither he was sent while young to a family of relatives in the Highlands. These languages he retained for many years, perhaps to the close of his life.

At a suitable age he was taken by an uncle, who was Dean of St. Paul's in London, and put to the celebrated Westminster school, where he finished his classical education, and left it with the reputation of a good scholar. On leaving school, he was put an apprentice to a merchant in London, and served in his counting room a regular clerkship; and here became qualified for the business of his future life.

Having at the age of twenty-one years come into possession of a sum of money, he vested it in articles of merchandise, and with it embarked for New York. As the market in that city was comparatively small, and not sufficient to demand his whole cargo, he formed a partnership with a Mr. Annesley; left a part of it with him, and went with the residue to Philadelphia. After spending about two years in that city, he returned to New York, and made it his future place of business and abode. He entered extensively into navigation and foreign commerce. He now became more intimately connected with his partner in trade, by marrying his sister; by her he had seven children, three only survived infancy.

His commercial pursuits called him much abroad; in prosecuting his business, he travelled extensively in Europe. Twice he went to Russia, and pushed his trade in all her seaports from St. Petersburg to Archangel; he was also in the northern isles of Scotland; and two several times was shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland. He took an active part in the "old French war," and was with his friend Colonel Mersey, (or Mercer,) in the fort of Oswego, as a purchaser of supplies for the British troops, when Montcalm reduced the fortress, and imprisoned the garrison. Colonel Mersey having command, Mr. Lewis served as his aid. Mersey was killed, and Lewis was captured, and taken to Canada. From thence, after some time, he was sent to France, and regularly exchanged. At the close of that war, the British government gave Mr. Lewis five thousand acres of land as a compensation for his military services.

After Mr. Pitt became minister, Mr. Lewis began, with

other patriots, to oppose the encroachments of the English government on the colonial rights, and undeviatingly persisted in his opposition till the revolution.

When the house of representatives of Massachusetts recommended a congress of delegates, from all the colonies, to be held in New York, in 1765, after the information of the stamp act having passed had reached this country, Mr. Lewis was a delegate to that congress for New York. He entered fully into the measures which were adopted by that body, and gave them his cordial support. When an attempt was made to put that odious law into operation, Mr. Lewis retired from business to a country residence which he owned on Long Island, where he resided until 1771. He then recommenced business, with a view of establishing his eldest son, and formed a partnership under the firm of "Francis Lewis and Son." But he again relinquished trade on the commencement of hostilities, in 1775.

On the twenty-second of April, 1775, by a convention of delegates from several counties in the province of New York, which convened in that city, Mr. Lewis was appointed a delegate to the continental congress. And in December following, he was continued by the provincial congress of New York, a member for 1776. His conduct and that of his colleagues, in voting for and signing the Declaration of Independence, was fully sanctioned by a convention of the state representatives, which met at White Plains on the 9th of July, the same month in which they had given their sanction to the act.

When the representatives of New York met in May, 1777, at Kingston, Mr. Lewis received a public vote of thanks of the convention, for his long and faithful services rendered to the colony and state of New York; and in October of the same year, he was again chosen to a seat in the continental congress. A year after that election, he was chosen a fourth and last time to represent New York in that national assembly.

While he was in congress, he acted in various capacities; for which his extensive knowledge of commercial business eminently qualified him. He was always active, always intelligent, always patriotic, and always upright. He was employed in purchasing clothing for the army, in contracting for provisions, for importing arms and ammunition, and in secret services for the government. He was also, on the committee of claims, which was instituted for putting the

accounts of the continent in a condition for settlement. He acted on many other committees, the duties of which, though no splendid, were nevertheless of much importance. It is deemed needless to enumerate them all. He, with Messrs. Sherman and Gerry, was appointed to repair to head quarters, near New York, to inquire into the state of the army, and to devise the best means for supplying its wants.

Not long after his retirement from congress, that body was not unmindful of his valuable services, and they appointed him a commissioner for the board of admiralty; that office he accepted.

The British wasted his property, they plundered what they could remove, and destroyed all that was immovable; inso-much, that at the termination of the war, he had but little more left than sufficient to pay his debts contracted before the war began. But they carried their resentment still farther; they took Mrs. Lewis a prisoner, and confined her in a close prison for several months, without a bed, and without a change of raiment. She, after immense suffering, was exchanged through the agency of General Washington. But she came from her severe confinement with a ruined constitution, and in about two years paid the debt of nature.

Mr. Lewis survived his wife until 1802, dying in December of that year, in the ninetieth year of his age. He left behind him an unsullied character.



### LEWIS MORRIS.

LEWIS MORRIS, of whom we now speak, was born in Mor-risania, in his paternal mansion, in the year 1726. Being the oldest of several sons he of course became proprietor of the manorial estate.

After having prosecuted the usual preparatory studies to qualify him for admission to college, he entered Yale College at the age of sixteen years, where he prosecuted his studies, under the presidency of the Reverend T. Clapp. At the end of four years, the usual period of the academic course in that seminary, he graduated, receiving "the honors of college" at twenty years of age. From college he returned to his estate, and devoted his attention to the business of agricul

ture. Possessing in a pre-eminent degree those personal attractions, which are usually estimated at their full value, abounding with wealth and having a social disposition, he was the universal favorite in every circle; and at an early age he became very popular throughout the colony. Though thus formed to adorn polite society, such as concentrates in commercial cities, he notwithstanding devoted himself to the endearments of domestic life, and his favorite pursuits of agriculture.

Thus was Lewis Morris situated, in possession of every property which could contribute to a pleasurable life; blessed with a numerous offspring, esteemed by a large circle of warm hearted friends, with whom, at his mansion, he shared his hospitality, it would appear that he could have no inducement to encounter the effects of any change in the condition of his country. Much he had to lose; and nothing to gain.

When the time arrived, in which it was deemed necessary to choose his side of the great question about to be discussed, had he felt disposed to delay and equivocate, he had the countenance of numerous and distinguished examples in the colony, to sustain him in such a war; but he was not compounded of such materials as would allow him to hesitate. Like some others in that, and in several of the other colonies, he was among the first to perceive, what the ultimate resort, and the final termination of that dispute, which was the first attempt by parliament to assert their sovereign right to impose taxes on the colonies, without their consent, would produce. He also descried what must be the condition of these colonies, should that principle be carried into effect, and become an established precedent, as it would, if the stamp-act, and others which followed, embracing the same principle, were put in force without opposition. Looking with a discerning eye to the end of the contest, he perceived the indispensable necessity of a determined resistance to that claim.

While many of his friends were cheering their hearts with the delusive hope, held forth in the repeal of the stamp act, and some other gleams of a fairer prospect, which occasionally broke through the impending cloud, and partially brightened this western hemisphere, with a prospect of reconciliation, Morris, like Hawley, J. and S. Adams, Hancock, and others in Massachusetts and in other colonies, clearly perceived that this would not be realized. He saw that negotiation, petitions, and remonstrances would all fail, and that

“after all we must fight.” From this conclusion, early formed, he never varied. In the course it indicated he never faltered; and for the safety of his country, and for securing the rights and liberty of her inhabitants, he felt deeply the necessity of entering on a system of measures for placing her in the best possible posture for resisting invasion.

He was a patriot that knew not how to temporize. Although not precipitate, he was determined; and his determination was of that calm, deliberate kind, which results from conviction. Hence it was that in his views, he was far in advance of many of the influential men in that colony. His circumstances shielded him against any suspicion of espousing the American cause with a view to sinister objects. He was not ambitious or aspiring. He might have office if he desired it. His domestic life and comforts silenced every suggestion that selfish motives might have urged upon him. He could gain nothing. He might sacrifice all, by resisting the parent government. Yet he chose to resist; and he did resist.

When the act of parliament was made known, which required a part of the inhabitants of the colony of New York, and others in other colonies, to furnish additional articles for the king's troops quartered among them, it gave rise to feelings of strong displeasure among the colonists at large. But in no one were they more general and decided than in New York. The law was entirely partial, operating exclusively on the inhabitants of those places where the troops were stationed.

In New York it was determined to resist the law, and prevent its being executed. Mr. Morris, although a private citizen, did not hesitate about declaring openly and on any occasion, that the law was unconstitutional and tyrannical, and that it was not to be submitted to unless by compulsion. The legislature refused to comply with the requisition; and although compelled to submit by a superior force, he never wavered in his sentiments, nor in his exertions to rouse the people to prepare for the conflict which he saw approaching.

The tragic scenes which were acting in New England, and especially in Massachusetts, about this time, combined their influence in convincing the colonies generally, that to protect themselves, and preserve their liberty, it was necessary to act in concert. This conviction led to the establishment of committees of correspondence, committees of safety, and to the general congress of 1774. To all these patriotic measures Mr. Morris gave his countenance openly and without

reserve. At this era, when many even of his friends and fellow citizens clung to the hope that an amicable adjustment of the dispute would yet be effected, and the tranquil state of the colonies be no further disturbed, he saw no medium where he could indulge such a hope. With him the alternatives were—persist decidedly, or submit to tyranny; fight, and conquer your enemies; or yield to slavery on yourselves and posterity. Between these he would not hesitate.

When the delegates to the first congress were chosen, few comparatively, even among the best informed and decidedly patriotic, contemplated war as the result of the dispute between the colonies and England. The object sought and desired from the deliberations of that assembly, was a settlement in a pacific manner, of all the existing difficulties, and a preservation of the constitutional rights of the colonists, and yet continue connected with the parent government.

Mr. Morris was too decided and frank in expressing his opinions, to be selected by the people of New York, with their feelings, for a member of that congress. His sentiments in favor of the rights of the colonies were too decided and ardent; and his avowed opposition to the arbitrary conduct of the British parliament, was too bold and unaccommodating to take a part in the deliberations of an assembly, whose views extended no farther than loyal addresses, remonstrances, and petitions.

But the time was near, and soon arrived, when men of other views, and other feelings, were required to take the lead, and give a direction to the course to be pursued in future. Although the congress of 1774, contained a number of that character, there were others, whose resolution wavered, and whose hopes withered, when contemplating an open resistance of the power of Great Britain. The period between the first and second congress had disclosed occurrences, and presented facts, which wrought a great change in the sentiments of the people at large; and prepared them to commit their cause to the management of men, whose views and feelings corresponded with those which Mr. Morris had long and openly avowed. He was now elected a delegate from the province of New York. In that assembly he found men of kindred spirits, and possessing views corresponding with his own. He was elected in April, and took his seat in congress, in May, 1775.

With such sentiments as he had long entertained, respecting the nature and design of the contest, and the great object

the English government had in view, relative to the American colonies, on the one part, and the necessity, and the extent of resistance, by the colonies, on the other, he entered the hall of congress, and he was already prepared to enter on, and prosecute to the greatest extent, and the fullest effect, such measures of defence, and of resistance, to every invasion of his country's just rights, as congress might command.

Before the session closed, he went to the westward, on the difficult service of endeavoring to dissuade the Indians from joining the British, and to induce them to unite with the Americans. On this mission he was absent in Pittsburgh, until the setting in of winter, constantly employed in promoting the views of congress, and in regular correspondence with the government, on the business in which he was engaged. In truth, he was employed, either in congress or out, continually, in providing for the defence, and safety of his country, whose cause he had espoused, with the fullest conviction of its rectitude, and with a determination to sustain it till victory should perch on the banner of liberty, or to be buried in its ruins.

The reluctance with which the great body of citizens, and also the provincial congress of New York, approached the subject of declaring independence, even after it had been nearly, if not fully resolved on by congress, was a serious embarrassment to the proceedings of their delegation. They were fully convinced of its indispensable necessity, to a successful resistance of England, and a vigorous prosecution of the war; and they were strangely impressed with the great importance of having the measure sustained by an unanimous vote, if practicable, at least by a majority in the delegation from the several states. But this awkwardness on the part of the people, and the congress of that province, lay as a heavy weight on their delegates, while the cannon of General Howe roused them from their lethargy, and in a few days, advanced them to a point of decision, which some other colonies had attained six months before.

It cannot be surprising that the inhabitants of New York should feel some reluctance, when agitating the proposal of declaring independence. They had the desolation of the town of Falmouth, and some other places, presented before them, the sufferings inflicted on Boston by the occupation of a British army; and their peculiar exposure to a bombardment by the British fleet then on the coast, as solemn admonitions of what they might expect would soon be dealt out

to them, in their defenceless condition. But, in all their danger, Mr. Morris shared as amply as any other individual of the province. His elegant mansion, his fine estate, his valuable timber, then growing in the vicinity of the city, and the exposed situation of his family—all these presented considerations of much weight to his mind, and all tending powerfully, to repress his ardor in favor of adopting such a bold and irrevocable measure, as that of renouncing allegiance to the royal government. But he acted not from selfish motives in this instance. A high principle, a disinterested regard for the happiness of the country in all future time, which he believed would be secured by it, impelled him to advocate the measure at the moment when his own dwellings and family were within reach of the guns of an English squadron, then riding at anchor opposite to his residence.

It is not easy to contemplate a situation attended with considerations more strongly tending to excite and quicken the feelings of a selfish heart, than that in which Mr. Morris was placed at the time when the question of independence was discussed on the floor of congress. But he was unmoved by them. He was stedfast; and moved directly forward to the point; and without hesitation sanctioned by his vote and signature, that measure, which devoted his establishment to havoc and desolation, himself to the peculiar vengeance of the enemy, and his family to dangers and sufferings severe and numerous, but which rescued his country from vassalage.

The result proved those sufferings to have been as many and severe, as the most gloomy imagination with all its forebodings could have anticipated. His house was ruined, and his farm wasted. His cattle were driven off, and appropriated to the subsistence of the invaders. His beautiful forest, of more than a thousand acres, given up to "havoc and spoil." His family driven into exile, and his whole estate subjected to all the desolating effects of an enraged soldiery, urged on in their work of destruction by feelings of vengeance toward the man who had boldly renounced allegiance. But the patriotism of his family, like his own, induced them to submit without murmuring to all the privations and sufferings they were called to endure, in the combat which was to decide the future condition of their country.

His three eldest sons took up arms, and entered the field in defence of their country. They served with reputation in different capacities, and received, as they had merited, the approbation of congress.



Mr. Morris relinquished his seat in congress in 1777, and was succeeded by his brother, Gouverneur Morris, and on his retirement, the same convention which elected his brother to supply his vacancy, passed a vote of thanks to him and his colleagues, "for their long and faithful services rendered to the colony and state of New York."

He continued to serve his native state in her legislature, and as an officer of her militia until independence was acknowledged, peace restored, and the country was settled under the federal constitution.

After the restoration of peace, he returned to his dilapidated estate; and resumed his former employment of agriculture. In this he spent his declining years with that serenity which is derived from a consciousness of having devoted his life and talents in promoting the interest and happiness of his fellow men.

He died in January, 1798, in the seventy-second year of his age. He was buried in the family vault at Morrisania, with many tokens of respect from his fellow citizens, and with the military honors due to his rank of major general of the militia of New York.

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## NEW JERSEY.

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### RICHARD STOCKTON.

This gentleman was descended from an English ancestry. His great grandfather came from England between the years 1660 and 1670, and took up his residence a few years on Long Island, in the vicinity of New York. He is reported to have been possessed of a large property. A few years after he was settled on Long Island, he turned his attention to New Jersey; and about 1680, he purchased a tract of land in that colony, near to Princeton, a beautiful town, containing a respectable and flourishing seminary of learning, Nassau Hall.

Two or three years after making the purchase, he with a few associates commenced the first settlement which had been begun by any Europeans in that district. There he

died in 1705. His name was Richard. To a son, bearing the same name, he bequeathed the principal part of his landed estate, in conformity with the existing custom in England, and the law of primogeniture. He, however, at his decease in 1720, devised the family seat to his youngest son, whose name was John. He was a patron of science; held several public offices; and was an upright and strictly religious man. In the latter part of his life, Princeton College was established near to his estate; and possessing both the means in an ample fortune, and the disposition, he was a liberal contributor to its funds. After a well-spent life, he expired in 1757, leaving to his eldest son, the subject of this memoir, abundant means for procuring the best education which could be obtained in the country.

Richard Stockton, who signed the Declaration of American Independence, was born at his paternal residence in Somerset county, near to Princeton, New Jersey, in the year 1730, on the first day of October.

He commenced his education under the tuition of the Rev. Lemuel Finley of West Nottingham, in the then province of Maryland. That was the seat of an academy, which at that early period, was one of the most flourishing seminaries south of New England. Having spent about two years in that school pursuing his preparatory studies, he was placed in New Jersey College, in Newark, then the seat of that institution. He graduated in 1748, at its first annual commencement.

After leaving college, he entered on the study of law, under the instruction of the Hon. David Ogden of Newark, a distinguished barrister, and the most eminent lawyer in that province. Under the tuition of that gentleman, Mr. Stockton enjoyed the best advantages to be obtained at that early age of the country. He was admitted to the bar in August, 1754, and four years after, to the grade of counsellor at law. He returned to his paternal residence, and rose with unusual rapidity, to the first rank of his profession; and in a short time he became confessedly the first lawyer in New Jersey, in reputation and employment. In 1763, he received the degree of sergeant at law, a distinction established in the English courts, and then recognized in their American colonies.

Wishing to enjoy an opportunity for improving his mind, by means not to be procured in America, he relinquished business during two years; and embarked at New York in June, 1766, for London, where, after a pleasant voyage, he

safely arrived. He was received and treated with a flattering distinction, by some of the most eminent men in the kingdom; and even had the honor (then considered a mark of great respect and distinction,) of being presented to the sovereign by one of the ministers of state. During his visit in Great Britain, he procured much patronage to the infant college; of whose honors he was one of the first recipients. His services in behalf of that institution were recognized on his return to New Jersey, in a manner highly creditable to the board of trustees, and honorable to himself, in a public vote of thanks.

At that date, the affairs of the American colonies had begun to assume an interesting attitude in England; insomuch that some of the most distinguished men in the kingdom had become partizans, for and against the colonies. He was consulted on the state of American affairs by the Marquis of Rockingham, by whom he was kindly and hospitably received, and entertained at his country-seat, during a week he spent at the mansion of his lordship.

After passing some time in England, in prosecution of the objects of his visit to that country, he went to the north of the kingdom, and visited Edinburgh, where he was treated with marked civility and attention, by the most distinguished gentlemen, nobles, and civilians in North Britain. The Earl of Leven was very particular in his polite civilities to Mr. Stockton. He was received by the citizens of Edinburgh with much respect, visited by the lord provost of the city, invited to a public dinner, provided as a compliment to him, addressed by the lord provost on that occasion, and had the freedom of the city conferred on him by an unanimous vote of the city government, as a testimony of their respect.

On that occasion he visited Doctor Witherspoon, at his residence in Paisley, who had been a short time previously chosen president of Princeton College. Doctor Witherspoon had declined accepting the office, much to the regret of the trustees and others, who were interested in the prosperity of that college; and by their request, Mr. Stockton waited upon Dr. Witherspoon, to try to prevail with him to reverse his first decision. And probably, his exertions had their desired effect. For a few months, subsequent to his visit, Doctor Witherspoon announced his acceptance of the appointment.

In his progress through the united kingdom, Mr. Stockton visited Ireland, and received marked demonstrations of respect from distinguished gentlemen of Dublin.

Indeed, civilities and respectful attentions, highly grateful to his feelings, seem to have been rendered to him by the people, in all parts of the kingdom that he visited.

During the time he spent in Great Britain, he experienced two providential escapes, when his life had been exposed to imminent danger; once by an attack of a robber in Edinburgh, and the other by shipwreck. After engaging his passage across the Irish channel in a packet, his baggage having been left behind, he was in consequence of that mistake prevented from embarking, and remained on shore. This proved the cause of his preservation, for the packet was lost in a violent storm, and every person on board perished. This interposition of Divine Providence in his behalf, made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. He often spoke of the event with emotions of solemnity, and with lively gratitude to his Great Preserver.

While Mr. Stockton was in London, he attended at Westminster Hall, and closely observed the various forensic eloquence of the most distinguished barristers then living. At the same time, the decisions of the learned judges of their high courts, were attended to by him, with a view to his own improvement as an orator, and to enlarge his stock of legal science. Even the theatre was not wholly neglected by him; as he correctly believed that he might derive benefit from the unrivalled talents of Mr. Garrick; although in principle opposed to visiting theatres simply for amusement. He returned to his home, with his mind, originally brilliant, enriched and improved with benefits derived from these various sources of instruction. He also, while in Ireland, became deeply impressed from actual observation, with the evils that would result to his country, by continuing in a colonial relation with Great Britain.

Having been absent from his family and friends more than a twelvemonth, and having left the charge of his business in the hands of others, he hastened to close his concerns abroad, and prepared for his return to the endearments of home. He reached America in September, 1767; and his arrival was greeted by his friends and neighbors with much pleasure; which they evinced, by escorting him from the port where he arrived to his residence.

In 1768, the year after his return from England, he commenced his public life. He was elevated to a seat in the supreme royal legislative, judiciary, and executive council of that province. In 1774, he was placed on the bench of the

supreme court ; where, for a time, he sat by the side of his early friend, and preceptor, the Honorable Mr. Ogden.

He had received marks of personal respect, esteem, and confidence, from the king, and many of the distinguished statesmen, besides the several offices which had been given to him. He respected the private character of the king, but thought him influenced by bad advisers in his policy respecting the American colonies. Besides the motives arising out of these considerations, he had others which might very naturally incline him to favor the royal cause. His own fortune was ample. This, in the event of an open conflict, would be liable to suffer depredations ; his family would be exposed to many privations, if not immediate dangers, in case an invasion ensued ; and he must be necessitated to separate from numerous personal friends, and thus sacrifice strong and endeared attachments. But all these, weighed in opposition to the welfare of his country, were not suffered to influence his determination. He had used his best exertions to prevent the anticipated crisis, while in Great Britain, but without success. After his return, he discovered, as he believed, a fixed and determined purpose, on the part of the parliament, to prosecute the system of measures they had begun, until they had forced the Americans to acquiesce in their domination. He could discover no prospect of closing the breach already made, consistently with the civil rights and liberty of his countrymen ; and, when the time of preparation came, he girded on his armor, and breasted himself for the storm.

In June, 1776, the provincial congress of New Jersey elected Mr. Stockton a member of the general congress, at that time in session, at Philadelphia. The instructions given to him and his colleagues, by the provincial congress, were so ample, and of such a nature, that they were authorized to unite with delegates from other colonies, to take the most vigorous measures for supporting the rights and liberties of America ; and if necessary for the attainment of these objects, to concur in declaring the united colonies independent of Great Britain ; and adopt such other measures as that step would render indispensable for framing a confederate government, negotiating treaties with foreign powers, for aid for commerce, and all other requisite acts, which the emergency might make it necessary to adopt. Although thus instructed and empowered ; and although he foresaw it must ultimately come to that result ; notwithstanding he had long weighed the important subject with much reflection ; yet, when the proposal

was discussed by congress, he deliberately listened to all the arguments presented in the debate. It had been supposed, that at the beginning of the discussion, he entertained some doubts as to the expediency of an *immediate* Declaration of Independence. But before it was closed, having attentively listened to all the arguments urged for and against it; on hearing the remarks of Mr. John Adams, his mind was conclusively determined in favor of adopting the momentous measure, without further delay; and when the measure was carried, he signed the declaration.

In September of the same year that he voted for, and set his signature to the Declaration of American Independence, he became a candidate for the office of governor of New Jersey, under the new constitution of the state. His competitor was William Livingston. On counting the ballots, the vote was equal. The friends of Mr. Stockton, however, were induced to concur in the election of Mr. Livingston, for urgent reasons then operating on their minds; but he was immediately chosen chief justice of the state, by an unanimous vote. He, however, declined the appointment. In the November following he was re-chosen a delegate to congress. He continued an active and very useful member of congress, during the summer and autumn of 1776, attending to his arduous duties, until in September, when he was deputed with Mr. Clymer of Pennsylvania, on a committee, to visit and inspect the northern army, then under the command of General Schuyler; the powers with which they were invested were ample; of great importance; and of a very delicate character. Yet they were managed with so much wisdom, prudence, and sound discretion; and the result was so beneficial to the cause, that the report of the services they performed, when rendered to congress, received the entire approbation of that body. On the termination of that mission he immediately resumed his seat in congress. His duty to his family, however, soon called his attention, and required his exertions to secure them from being captured by the enemy, who were then triumphantly marching through New Jersey. His family residence lay in the supposed rout of their march; and the American army was so reduced, and in such a suffering condition, that it could afford no protection to the inhabitants. The families of those who had signed the instrument which severed the colonies from the parent state, were peculiarly obnoxious to the British forces; and Mr. Stockton was constrained to retire from congress to convey

his own to a place of safety. After having conducted them into the county of Monmouth, about thirty miles from his residence, he resided with Mr. Covenhoven, a patriotic friend of his; and he, together with Mr. Covenhoven, was surprised, and made a prisoner, by a party of refugees, who had been informed of the place of his temporary residence, by a treacherous wretch. They were dragged from their beds at a late hour of the night; stripped and plundered of their property, and conducted to New York. They first conveyed him to Amboy, shut him in the common goal, exposed him, thus destitute, to severe suffering by the cold weather; and in New York, he was subjected to a similar confinement, and extreme suffering. The severities he endured, during his imprisonment in Amboy and New York, laid the foundation for the disease which closed his life not long after. While in the latter place, the enemy withheld from him, not only the comforts, but even the necessaries of life; and this, notwithstanding his respectability of character and standing in life, and a very delicate state of health. At one time he was left absolutely without food more than twenty-four hours; and afterwards supplied with that which was coarse in quality, and scanty in amount. This treatment of Mr. Stockton, by the British, engaged the attention of congress, and General Howe was informed, if Mr. Stockton was not treated in a manner becoming his condition, and in conformity to the dictates of humanity, which had been observed by the Americans towards their prisoners, and which the established rules of modern warfare demanded, he might expect a practical retaliation on those of the British who might fall into the power of the Americans.

The complicated sufferings he endured while in captivity, the burning of his papers and fine library, the plundering of his property, particularly of his stock of horses and cattle; the general depredations committed on his estate, real and personal, wherever it was exposed to the ravages of an incensed foe, and the losses he sustained by reason of the ruinous depreciation of the continental paper currency, left him only the remnants of a large fortune, exhausted so entirely that it seemed to him only a mass of ruins; and finding himself so destitute of the means for providing comfortably for his family, he was compelled to resort to friends for a temporary accommodation, to procure the absolute necessaries of life. This caused a depression of spirits, out of which he never fully rose; and aggravated a lingering disease which

terminated his life. He languished for a considerable time under this calamity which, in the latter part of his life, was much increased by a cancer in his neck, whose insidious and fatal approaches are always clearly perceived, without the least hope of remedy. He died on the twenty-eighth day of February, 1781, in the fifty-first year of his age.

A minute delineation of character, does not comport with the design or limits of this work ; only a brief summary can be given. The character of Mr. Stockton as a patriot, inflexibly devoted to the liberty, rights, and independence of his country, may be easily understood by what has been already stated. He not only pledged "his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor," for the attainment of his country's independence ; but he fully redeemed the pledge by becoming a martyr to her cause. His life was a sacrifice ; his fortune was nearly so ; and his sacred honor attended him to his grave ; and remains behind him an untarnished legacy to his posterity and his country. As a lawyer, he was learned and upright. He falsified the charge sometimes alledged against "all lawyers," that they will espouse any cause for the pecuniary reward. He would not engage to defend or advocate a case which he was not persuaded was just ; and he often defended the widow, the fatherless, and the poor, gratuitously, when by engaging against them, an ample compensation would have been given him. In this respect, he was strictly conscientious and exemplary. His eloquence was of a superior kind ; pleasing, chaste, forcible, and persuasive. As a judge on the bench, he was upright, perspicuous, and impartial ; and withal, so clear, that his decisions were generally satisfactory to the interested parties.

As a member of the community in which he resided, he was in many respects a benefactor. He was dignified in his deportment ; affable, kind, and condescending to his inferiors and dependents ; a patron of science ; an uniform promoter of virtues and honorable enterprise, but an enemy to every thing dishonest, hypocritical, and disingenuous. And, as a Christian, he was a firm believer in the evangelical doctrine of the gospel ; regulated his life by its precepts and injunctions, in a consistent and exemplary manner ; and in a protracted and very painful disease, he was sustained by a hope derived from its promises of attaining through death, to that rest which remains for the pious, beyond the grave.



## JOHN WITHERSPOON.

THIS venerable gentleman, who was eminently distinguished for his piety, learning, and a strong and powerful mind, as a divine, a president of a seminary of learning, and a statesman ; and whose name stands enrolled among those who signed the Declaration of American Independence, was born at Yester, a parish in the vicinity of Edinburgh, in Scotland, on the fifth day of February, 1722. He was lineally descended from the celebrated John Knox, the great and intrepid leader of the Reformation in Scotland. His father was a respectable minister in the church of Scotland, settled in the parish of Yester ; and was much respected and beloved by the people of his pastoral charge. He, as might have been expected from such a father, bestowed much care and watchful attention upon the early instruction of his son, to pre-occupy his infant mind with moral and religious impressions, before it should be engrossed with those of an opposite character. Being convinced that it is much easier, by beginning right, to impress the infant mind with right principles, as fast as it opens to receive them, and thus shut out wrong ones, than it is to eradicate the latter, after they have obtained admission through neglect. And he was not disappointed. It was his early wish that his son might be fitted for the gospel ministry ; and he was gratified in eventually realizing the object of his wishes. For this care and wisdom of his father, in choice of the object for which he wished to educate his son, and the fidelity with which he attended to its accomplishment, Doctor Witherspoon felt, and often expressed a pious gratitude towards his venerable parent.

At an early age he was placed at the public school in Haddington, where he soon was distinguished for his assiduous application to study, for his superior native powers of mind, and uncommon attainments in learning. Nor was he less distinguished for a discriminating power and quickness of perception, which comprehended whatever subject engaged his attention. With such native talents, thus faithfully improved, he was prepared for an early transfer from the preparatory academic school to the higher seminary, where he was to finish his literary course ; qualified to commence his *professional studies*. He was removed from Haddington

school to the university of Edinburgh, at fourteen years of age. There great credit was awarded him, for his diligence and attainments in the various branches of learning, taught in that eminent seat of science ; and at an early stage of his theological studies, he gave indications of talents in sacred criticism, which characterized him in all his future life. He prosecuted his professional course in the theological hall at the university, and left it at twenty-one years of age, a licensed preacher of the gospel.

Such was the esteem in which he was held in the place of his nativity that the people of his father's parish, invited him to settle with them as an assistant minister with him, stipulating for the right to succeed him in the charge after his father's decease. But having received another invitation from the west of Scotland, to settle in the parish of Beith, he gave the latter his preference ; and was ordained there, with the universal approbation of that congregation. In Beith he labored faithfully in the ministry several years, enjoying the esteem and affections of a grateful and attentive people.

When the battle of Falkirk was fought, he with several others had the curiosity to be present, that they might witness the contest. Although they were near the scene of action, they took no part in the contest ; but, after the victory was decided in favor of the rebels, these persons paid rather a dear price for gratifying their curiosity. They were taken prisoners, and confined in the castle of Doune. Several of them effected an escape at a great risk of their lives. One lost his life in consequence of the attempt ; but Doctor Witherspoon seeing the disaster of his companion in the attempt, being the last of the number, concluded to remain till regularly liberated.

After attending faithfully to the duties of his ministry at Beith for several years, he was transferred to the large manufacturing town of Paisley. He resided there, ministering to an affectionate people, and enjoying the respect and esteem of the surrounding country ; when an application was made to him to come to America, and take the presidency of the college of New Jersey. While he resided in Paisley he was invited to Dublin, in Ireland ; to Dundee, in Scotland, and to Rotterdam, in Holland ; to take the pastoral charge of a large congregation in each of those places, besides the application from the board of directors of New Jersey College. But he declined them all. To the latter he was invited in 1766, by an unanimous vote of the trustees of the institution, and was

informed of it by Richard Stockton, Esq. who was then in London. The trustees addressed a letter to Mr. Stockton, requesting him to visit Paisley, and personally inform Doctor Witherspoon of their request, and solicit his acceptance of the appointment. Little did either of them anticipate at that time, that they would become colleague members of the American congress, and act together in declaring the independence of the American colonies, and setting their names, side by side, on the instrument by which that act was proclaimed to the world. Yet that event occurred in ten years from that date. Doctor Witherspoon declined this application for two seasons. There were considerations respecting the then existing condition of the college, which decided him to give a negative reply to the application. But Mrs. Witherspoon felt an unwillingness to leave the land of her nativity, and the residence of her connections, and this strengthened and confirmed his decision at that time. Happily, however, both of these impediments in the way of his acceptance were removed, at a subsequent and no very distant period. Despairing of obtaining him, the trustees, about two months previous to their being informed by Mr. Stockton, that the obstacles to Doctor Witherspoon's acceptance were removed, had made choice of Doctor Samuel Blair; but they immediately re-elected Doctor Witherspoon; and Doctor Blair, on being informed that Doctor Witherspoon would now accept, immediately tendered his resignation. By that noble act of generosity and disinterestedness of Doctor Blair, the trustees were relieved from a perplexing embarrassment, and the services of Doctor Witherspoon were secured to the seminary, to the great gratification of its friends and patrons.

Doctor Witherspoon arrived at Princeton in August, 1768, accompanied by his family. On his arrival being announced, a special meeting of the board of trustees was called, which met on the seventeenth day of that month, and inaugurated him as president of Princeton College. For some time previous to his arrival, the reputation of that college, once justly high, had been on the wane. His entering on his office as president marked a new era in its prosperity. His reputation had been widely diffused before he left Scotland, and had given rise to high anticipations in this country. On his arrival, and taking upon himself the charge of presiding over its interests, the effect in the country to revive its prosperity, was almost immediately beneficial. The number of students who sought *instruction* in that college increased rapidly. He brought

with him, and incorporated in the system of instruction, now revised, all the recent improvements that had taken place in the older seminaries of Great Britain, so far as was practicable in that comparatively feeble and infant institution. Indeed his acceptance of the presidency of Princeton College, conferred an important benefit on the cause of literature and science in America. Immediately after he entered on the duties of his office, the party feuds and dissensions that had existed in the board of trustees, by his influence and prudence speedily subsided. The funds of the college, which were in a low condition, and still sinking, were in a short time augmented by the active exertions made use of in various parts of the country; and the province of New Jersey, which had done nothing for the benefit of the institution previously to that time, was induced to lend some aid in promoting its prosperity. But his learning and his judicious and advantageous system of managing the establishment, were not among the greatest advantages resulting from the accession of Doctor Witherspoon to the presidency. Although the study of theology had occupied much of his time and attention, that he might be thoroughly furnished for a faithful discharge of the duties of his pastoral office, yet he was far from limiting his reading to works on theology. Sensible that a knowledge of every valuable science would contribute and enlarge the sphere of his usefulness to mankind, he applied himself to other branches of science, and became possessed of a knowledge of almost every subject embraced in the circle of the sciences. He was well informed respecting the grounds of the controversy between Great Britain and her American colonies; and early after his arrival in this country, became a decided advocate of the latter. Hence, when the college of Princeton was broken up by the incursions of the enemy, the citizens of New Jersey turned their attention to him to represent them in the general congress. By an election to a seat in that council of the nation, he was called to exercise his talents on a new theatre, where the variety of his learning and the vigorous powers of his mind were so happily displayed as to gather fresh lustre to his already extended reputation.

He was called by the citizens of New Jersey, to assist them in framing a new constitution of government for that state, in 1776. And when he appeared in that body, and exhibited his knowledge of legislative science, those present who had made politics the object of their principal researches, were not a little surprised at the readiness and intelligence

with which he investigated every subject which was discussed in that convention.

He was chosen a delegate to the general congress, on the twenty-first of June, 1776, by the provincial congress of New Jersey; and he took his seat in that body, a few days before the fourth of July, the memorable birth day of the American nation. He had deliberated on the great question which was then to be settled forever, in domestic retirement; and when he was introduced, to take a part in the discussions of congress, on that important subject, he at once gave evidence of his preparation.

Before his election, he had taken an active and decided part in the conventions, and revolutionary committees of New Jersey; and had manifested his superior qualifications to conduct the interests of the state in a higher station.

The maturity and decision of his judgment, on the great question of the independence of this nation, is shown in the laconic reply he gave to a remark made by a distinguished member of congress; "That the people were not ripe for a Declaration of Independence," Doctor Witherspoon observed, "In my judgment, sir, we are not only ripe, but rotting."

Doctor Witherspoon was continued a representative of New Jersey, in congress, during the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, 1781, and 1782. He was so constantly attentive to his duties, that it was a very unusual fact that he was absent from his seat, during the whole period of his appointment, for a single day. And he regarded the importance of sustaining his ministerial character in such a prominent point of view, that he never consented to substitute his clerical dress, for another more consonant with civil employment. This was done by some ministers who were also members of that body. But he considered it correct for himself, always to appear, wherever he might be, and however employed, in the insignia of his professional character, and strictly adhered to his views of propriety. It is proper in this place to remark, that he never, during his civil employments, lost sight of his ministerial duties, but embraced every opportunity that presented, for preaching the gospel to his fellow men.

It is deemed needless to specify particularly the various services, which he rendered as a member of congress. It is well known, that most of the important business transacted in that body, was submitted to special committees, to investigate, and report their views to the house. The superior *intelligence of Doctor Witherspoon* on all the great subjects to

be decided by congress, presented him as a member pre-eminently qualified to be placed on most committees of great responsibility. His services were incessant, and unremitting; and they were also of immense advantage to the cause of the country's liberty and independence.

He took a firm stand in opposition to the ruinous system of emitting a paper currency, after its excess had caused a considerable depreciation in its value. In communicating his views on that subject, which he maintained consistently to the end, he astonished his contemporaries by the extent of his financial knowledge, and minute and particular acquaintance with that intricate science. He also opposed the wasteful system which had been adopted, for supplying the continental army, by allowing a commission to the contractors, on all the moneys they paid out, instead of the system of forming special contracts, which he advocated, and which has since been adopted.

In debating, his usual practice was to listen attentively to the remarks of others; take minutes of what he wished to notice particularly; compose his speech, commit it to memory, which he did with much facility; and when he appeared on the floor, he began with an exordium, in which he disposed of what had just been delivered, and then proceeded with his prepared speech, with so much regularity in noticing the several points brought forward in the course of the debate, in such regular order, and with so much force of argument, as both surprised and delighted those who heard him. His mind was quick in apprehending, and his memory powerful in retaining, what he read or heard. It was so much so, that his common method of preparing for the desk was, to compose his sermon, read it over three times only, leave his manuscript at home, and go and address his audience from memory.

While he was a member of congress, he acted a conspicuous part, in the board of war, and the board of finance. He was also one of a commission, appointed by congress, on a request from New York and New Hampshire, to repair to Vermont, and adjust, if practicable, the disputes which had arisen between the settlers on the Green Mountains; the jurisdiction over which was claimed by both of these states, and disallowed by the settlers. The duty assigned him he performed; but it was without the desired result; nor was it finally settled until Vermont was acknowledged as an independent state, and became united to the confederacy.

Doctor Witherspoon voluntarily retired from congress at

the close of the year 1779, although he was again called upon to renew his important labors in that assembly. At the time of his retirement, he applied himself to the object of reviving the institution over which he presided, which had fallen into decay during the British invasion of New Jersey. The more active part of recommencing the course of instruction was committed to his son-in-law, Vice President Smith ; while he sought some relaxation in a retirement to his own country-seat, about a mile from the college. But the influence of his name and character, in connection with the college, was not withdrawn, but continued to be felt with a benign effect, on its reviving prosperity ; and its former reputation was soon restored.

Soon after the preliminaries of peace were settled between the United States and Great Britain, in 1783, on the urgent request of the trustees of that college, but contrary to his own judgment, he crossed the Atlantic to England, to try to obtain funds in behalf of that seminary, in the country from which this had but just then been severed for ever ; and while the feeling of resentment was still warm in England on that account. He predicted that the enterprise would probably prove unsuccessful : and thus it did in fact prove. He obtained but little more than sufficient to defray the expenses of the visit. On this excursion he was absent about nine months. On his return to New Jersey, he immediately entered upon his retirement, in which he spent the remainder of his life, as far as was consistent with the duties he was required to perform to the college, by reason of his office of president, and those belonging to his ministerial profession.

If Doctor Witherspoon is viewed as a composer of sermons, he must be placed among the first rank of orthodox divines, in this or any other country. His printed sermons published in his works, in four vols. 8vo. are alone sufficient to confirm this opinion. But the public voice has already decided this as his character. And it is believed that no judicious person, who reads his works, will dissent from the judgment of the public in this particular.

His manner in the pulpit was grave, solemn, and deeply impressive. He engaged the attention of his audience at the beginning of his sermon, and it was continued unabated to the end. He was for some years occasionally subject to spasmodic convulsion fits, which were supposed to be of the apoplectic kind ; and these were connected with a peculiar *nervous* susceptibility and a dizziness, which were wont to

he produced if he yielded to that ardency of manner, which his natural warmth of feeling strongly urged him. But having been subject to that calamity from an early period of his life he found it indispensable to his own safety, to adopt a grave solemn manner of delivery, in his public addresses, and carefully to discipline his natural ardor into a more safe and moderate manner. It was difficult to hear him without being both instructed and benefitted by his discourses. He possessed a strength of thought, and a force of expression, happily adapted to usefulness in a preacher of the gospel, rarely equalled, and still more rarely surpassed.

About two years before his decease he lost his eyesight. But this affliction did not make him relinquish his ministerial duties. After he was unable to see his own way, he was often conducted into the pulpit by the hand of another, both at home and abroad. And when there, standing in the presence of Him, who is the God of the sanctuary, with his own eyes shut in perpetual darkness, and precluded from the light of the sun, he presented to the beholders, one of the most impressive scenes imaginable. A venerable minister of the gospel, more than seventy years of age, himself blind, addressing to an assembly of accountable beings, the message of their Creator and Judge, concerning the most weighty subjects that can be imagined with a feeling of deep and tender concern for their welfare, with unabated earnestness, and with the grave solemnity of one who stood on the verge of eternity, hastening to finish his work, and preparing to give an account of his stewardship. If any combination of circumstances could produce salutary impressions on the heart, we might naturally look for them in a case like that just mentioned.

As a writer, Doctor Witherspoon possessed a great versatility of talent, which he could successfully apply to any subject he chose to handle. His talent for wit and satire was almost unrivalled; a weapon which he knew how to apply with irresistible force against an antagonist. Perhaps these remarks were never more fully verified, than in his "Ecclesiastical Characteristics." He could on a proper occasion, exercise his pen with the ease and graceful pleasantry of Addison.

He possessed a gigantic mind; he wrote and published on many subjects; and on each he gave the impress of his powerful intellect.

His essay on the "nature, value, and uses of money," is acknowledged as one of the best that ever appeared in this country



and produced a happy influence on the minds of the community, on that intricate subject. Indeed, he never composed an essay for publication, without he had something important to communicate ; and he never published his views, without producing a good effect on the minds of his readers.

His "Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage," evinces a thorough acquaintance with the subject, a minute investigation of its influence and consequences on society, and a deep and intimate knowledge of the human heart.

But among his works, those on theological subjects held the pre-eminence. And of these, may be selected, as among the happiest of his efforts, his essay on "justification by free grace, through Jesus Christ;" and on "the nature, and necessity of regeneration;" and that on "the importance of truth in religion," or "the connection that subsists between sound principle and a holy practice." These several productions are not surpassed by any writings on those subjects, hitherto published in the English language.

As a manager in civil and ecclesiastical politics, he was eminently skillful, wise, and successful. This he evinced before he left his native country, in the controversy between "moderate," and "orthodox" parties, into which that branch of the Scottish church was divided ; and which called forth the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics," before mentioned. Although for a time he was in the minority, by his address and prudent management, without resorting to any unworthy or improper measures, he succeeded in obtaining the majority to co-operate with him, and in securing a complete triumph of the cause which he believed to be just ; in which belief many of the wisest and most upright ministers and dignitaries of the English church, fully concurred. In the presbyterian church of the United States, his character and influence were justly held in high respect and estimation. In their judicatories he was eminently useful, by his knowledge of the general subjects which came before them, by his acquaintance with the correct rules of conducting them, and the facility with which he disentangled the intricacies and embarrassments, with which they were sometimes encumbered. "He was clear and conclusive in reasoning ; and from a peculiar soundness of judgment and a habit of business, skillful in conducting every discussion to the most speedy and decisive termination." And when he was taken away

by death, it might have been said with truth, that a great man had fallen.

At length, bodily infirmities, which had been creeping upon him for years, and gradually undermining his constitution, attacked him with an accumulated force, which was increased by the loss of his sight. His regular bodily exercise was, by this affliction, necessarily greatly diminished, by reason of which his health suffered; and it was apparent that his useful life was fast approaching to a close. He endured his sufferings with a patience and cheerfulness becoming the character of a Christian minister, when called to exemplify the gospel he had preached to others, in the closing scene of life. He was released from his labors, trials, and sufferings, on the fifteenth day of November, 1794, in the seventy-third year of his age.

Doctor Witherspoon was twice married. His first wife was a Scottish lady, a Miss Montgomery, to whom he was united in early life. She was a pious, benevolent, exemplary Christian.

His posterity, (all by his first marriage,) consisted of three sons and two daughters. Ann, the eldest, was married to the Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith, his successor in the presidency of the college. Frances was married to Doctor David Ramsey, of Charleston, South Carolina, the historian of the American revolution. Her interesting memoirs, written by her husband, have been extensively read and admired by the pious, throughout the United States.



### FRANCIS HOPKINSON.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON was born at Philadelphia, in the year 1737. His parents were English people of respectable standing in their native country, whence they emigrated while young, and settled in Philadelphia. His mother's name was Johnson, a niece of the then Bishop of Worcester. Mr. Hopkinson and his wife appear to have been well educated; and to have been connected with literary and polite society in England; and they maintained a corresponding standing in Philadelphia.

Mr. Thomas Hopkinson, the father of Francis, was the

personal friend of Doctor Franklin, and was associated with him in some of his philosophical experiments,

Mr. Hopkinson did not continue long to benefit and adorn society. He was removed by death in the prime of life ; and he left his amiable and excellent wife a widow, with a large family of children, with but a moderate income for their support and education. At the time of his father's death, his son Francis was but fourteen years old ; but he was blessed with a good mother.

She devoted herself to the early education and moral and religious instruction of her children ; superintending them herself, until their religious principles were so formed and established, that they might be trusted away from her immediate inspection, which was requisite for finishing their education. To this interesting employment Mrs. Hopkinson devoted herself, denying herself every indulgence and enjoyment which interfered with this her first of earthly duties. To the formation of their manners and character, on correct principles of morality and religion, she applied herself with care and assiduity, until she deemed it safe to send Francis to a literary seminary. She then sent him to the college of Philadelphia, in the first class of which he was a graduate.

On his leaving that school, he commenced the study of law, in which science he made rapid proficiency. After having finished his studies as a pupil, and been admitted to the bar as a practitioner of law, in the year 1765, he took a voyage to England to visit his relatives, and to improve his mind. There he spent about two years ; after which he returned in 1768, to his native land, and soon after he was united by marriage to Miss Ann Borden, of Bordentown, in New Jersey.

The incidents to be recorded of Mr. Hopkinson's public life are few ; he represented the state of New Jersey in congress, in 1776, and set his signature to the Declaration of Independence, with the other patriots who adopted that most important measure in the name of their country. He had the appointment of loan officer for a number of years, the duties of which he discharged with fidelity. On the decease of George Ross, Esq., he received an appointment to the office of judge of admiralty for the state of Pennsylvania ; which office he held until 1790, when President Washington appointed him district judge of the same state. He discharged the duties of both these offices with fidelity and ability.

During the time of his entire life parties ran high, both in Pennsylvania and in the United States. A man of his warm feelings and ardent patriotism, who had embarked his fortune

and exerted his best efforts to secure the benefits of the revolution, it was not to be supposed would be idle, or an indifferent spectator, looking quietly on without becoming a decided partizan. He was a firm whig in the revolution, a decided republican in principle, and in politics a federalist. Mr. Hopkinson was an able, sagacious, and efficient advocate of the principles of the party he espoused. He had a great talent for humor and satire. His country will long remain indebted to his writings, the fruits of his peculiar genius for their effects in the revolutionary conflict. His numerous publications, happily adapted to the times when they appeared, were very popular, were read with great avidity; and they produced in a great degree, the effects he wished, in cheering and animating his countrymen, when public disasters had a tendency to produce public despondency.

His literary acquirements were various; and he appears to have possessed the talent, not very common, of handling any subject to which he gave his attention, with peculiar facility. And all his native powers and various acquisitions he devoted to the good of his country, with a peculiarly happy adaptation to the occasions when he exerted them. His humor was refined and chaste; always giving pleasure, without wounding or offending any person. This rendered him a pleasing companion in every social circle in which he mingled.

The effect of his writings on the occasions which called them forth, was powerful and decisive. Although several of his tracts were as ephemeral as the occasion which elicited them, having answered the end designed, they have passed away with the pleasure which they afforded to their interested readers. But there are some of his effusions which will remain, to perpetuate his reputation to a remote age, at least, so long as men are pleased with pure wit and genuine humor. Among several, it will not be amiss to particularize "*The battle of the kegs*" and his "*Essay on the properties of a salt box.*"

He had been for several years subject to the gout, which at length was of that kind that is denominated *misplaced* by medical writers. It frequently attacked him in the head; and though he had experienced a considerable respite from those attacks for some time previous to his decease, at length he was seized with an apoplectic fit, which caused his death in the course of two hours, in the fifty-third year of his age.

He left behind him a widow and five children; two sons and three daughters.

## JOHN HART.

THE gentleman whose life we are now to sketch, was one who could be induced by no sinister motives to assume the posture of resistance. He had nothing to hope for which could add to or increase his domestic comfort and enjoyment. Although not affluent, yet he possessed a farm sufficiently large and productive, to furnish all the means necessary for the support and education of his numerous family. This farm, lying in Hunterdon county, New Jersey, he superintended and cultivated; his house was the seat of hospitality, charity, and piety. Surrounded by a promising family, and in the midst of a neighborhood, who by common consent gave him the deserved and most honorable title of "Honest John Hart," and respected by all for his consistency of character, and loved for his moral, social, and religious virtues; what more had this man to wish for? What had he not to hazard, and not improbably to sacrifice, by resisting the authority of Great Britain, and the laws of the English parliament? He sought not for honor; he desired not office; he felt no eagerness for emolument; happy in his family and neighbors; contented with his possessions, and desirous of no change in his circumstances; what could influence him to rebel against a government that never had oppressed him; and which, if it established its claims, and carried them into practical operation, would never subject him to any pecuniary burden deserving a moment's regard? His motive was the maintenance of a principle imbibed in childhood, that liberty was his inalienable right, which he was under an indispensable obligation to deliver unimpaired to his children, and to defend against tyranny and usurpation at the hazard of life and fortune.

His father, from whom he inherited considerable patrimony, was Edward Hart, of Hopewell township, in Hunterdon county, New Jersey. He raised a volunteer corps, called "*The Jersey Blues*," with whom he marched to Quebec, and arrived there in season to share in the victory, and witness the fall of General Wolfe, in the "Old French war." From that corps the title of *Jersey Blues* has been continued, and handed down, with honorable distinction to the present time. His son John took no active part in the military achievements and entertainments of that period. In

dulging his domestic predilections, he remained at home, cultivating his farm with his own hands. In possession of every thing which this world could furnish to render him contented he remained with his family; but at the same time he kept his eye steadily fixed on the proceedings of parliament in relation to the colonies, and was one of the first to become persuaded of the direct tendency and certain consequence of the principle set forth in the stamp act; and was convinced that nothing short of absolute slavery would be the condition of the colonists, unless they resisted the claim of taxing them without their consent. There he early took his stand, and uniformly maintained it, in accordance with the principle he avowed, that an imposition of taxes on a people, without their concurrence by representation, was despotism; and to this he resolved never to submit. Hence he cordially united with others in electing delegates to the first general congress, which convened in the city of New York, in the autumn of 1765.

The repeal of the "Stamp act," and the dismissal of the Duke of Bedford and Mr. Grenville from the ministry, and the appointment of the Marquis of Rockingham, afforded cordial satisfaction throughout the colonies; and the people of New Jersey participated in the general pleasure in full proportion with the other colonists. They flattered themselves that the design of parliament, which had caused so much alarm, and produced such a general excitement throughout the provinces, was now laid aside, not to be renewed. What strengthened this confidence greatly was the popularity of the new minister in America, who was supposed to favor the claims of the colonies, and to entertain friendly feelings toward them generally.

While some viewed "the declaratory act," as it was called, as intended to sooth the feelings of those lofty spirited men who had upheld the Grenville administration, there were not a few who were better acquainted with the disposition of the men from whom the king would select his cabinet; and whatever they might hope, their fears still prevailed that it was a secret reserve to be called into operation whenever the parliament should deem it expedient. These, of course, carried their views forward, anticipating the time when the claim of a right to impose taxes on the colonists without their consent would be insisted on again. Nor were they deceived. For when, in 1767, Charles Townsend brought the plan of revenue, including a number of articles

on which a duty was to be paid on their being imported into the British American colonies, the whole community took alarm again, and were fully convinced that the repeal of the stamp act was only a lure to deceive them, and quiet their former apprehensions. Perhaps no man felt this spirit of resistance more uniformly or with a more inflexible determination than Mr. Hart. He resolved not to yield the principle but with life. To this determination he adhered without wavering, until the revolutionary war was closed, and the object for which it was maintained had been achieved. In the prosecution and progress of that war few individuals suffered more in pecuniary losses and personal afflictions than himself.

He cheerfully and with the utmost cordiality united in the non-importation agreement, and promoted it with his utmost influence. The oppressive measures of the ministry were sustained by parliament, as has been often mentioned in this volume. The partial repeal of Townsend's revenue system still left the duty on tea. The opposition to its importation into the colonies became universal; and the situation of that brought into Boston and New York is well known to every reader in the least degree conversant with the history of the period. The destruction of the tea in Boston produced the retaliation of the parliament in the Boston port bill; and this, together with preceding measures, brought together the congress of 1774. Of that venerable and ever to be respected body, Mr. Hart was a member.

From congress, when it adjourned, he returned to his domestic pursuits, awaiting the result of the measures which they had adopted.

In the early part of the following year, he was again appointed a delegate to congress by the general assembly of New Jersey, and attended in his seat in the May following.

"The Lexington Battle" having intervened between his election in January, and the meeting of congress in May, 1775, a spirit of resentment was roused throughout the provinces, and pervaded congress as well as their constituents. Mr. Hart being then about sixty years of age, was found to be very useful, by the influence which he exerted in moderating the more youthful delegates, especially those from the southern colonies.

As congress before their adjournment had adopted such measures of defence as the situation of the country demanded, *so far as the means within their power would justify, an ad*

jourment took place ; when Mr. Hart again resumed his domestic employments, with that simplicity and singleness of mind which he had evinced in every situation where he had been called to act. He now found that the concerns of his family and his estate demanded his care and attention ; and feeling convinced that his presence was less needed in congress than at home, he requested the assembly which elected him, for reasons he assigned, to accept his resignation, which he then tendered. This was accepted, and he in a great measure withdrew for a short period from public business. During that time, however, he continued a member, and was vice president of the colonial assembly.

At that time, the royal authority having ceased in the province, the assembly gave place to a convention of deputies from several counties, which consisted exclusively of whigs of decided character. This convention exercising the executive and legislative powers of the province, immediately resolved to put in requisition Mr. Hart's services, which they deemed too valuable to the interests of the country to be dispensed with ; and on the fourteenth day of February, 1776, reappointed him a delegate to the general congress. Impressed with the importance which was attached to the election, he again took his seat in that national council, when it came together. With great promptness and unanimity, the convention instructed their delegates to unite with the delegates from other provinces, to consent and agree to what ever measures congress might deem necessary, for the defence and security of the rights and liberties of the American colonies ; and pledged themselves as the legal representatives of New Jersey, to execute whatever measures congress might adopt, with their utmost power.

Although the language of their instructions would have justified the delegates in uniting at once, in dissolving their allegiance to the king and parliament of Great Britain, and the state would have stood pledged to approve of and support their decision ; yet it is more than probable, that few if any of their leading men, at that time, even contemplated such a measure being presented for the consideration of congress. It appears evident that all hope of a reconciliation with Great Britain was not then extinguished ; but as in the adjoining province of Pennsylvania, so in New Jersey, a few months only produced a general and entire revolution of feeling and sentiment on that subject, throughout New Jersey, and the people were ripe for an entire separation from the parent govern-



ment. In producing this revolution, the information which was received, that England was in treaty with some of the German princes, to obtain mercenary troops to assist them in subduing the colonies, had much influence to induce their representatives in congress to harmonize in sentiment with the people. It was deemed all important that their delegates should not only truly represent the feelings of the people, but that they should do it unanimously. The provincial congress therefore proceeded to effect the changes necessary for these objects. In this new choice, while some of the existing delegates were omitted, and others substituted, Mr. Hart, whose views and sentiments had been uniform, and were well known, was retained in his office. This was effected subsequently to the introduction to congress by Richard Henry Lee, of the resolution, which brought the question of declaring the independence of the colonies immediately into discussion. This placed him among the bold advocates and signers of that declaration, which was decided on the memorable fourth of July, 1776, and gave him a passport to immortality.

It has been mentioned before, that in the event of open hostilities, the situation of Mr. Hart's estate would peculiarly expose him, his family, and property, to the ravages and desolations of the enemy. The time had now arrived when he was to realize the full measure of the evils which he had anticipated.

It may be remembered, that all those patriots who advocated the independence of the colonies, were pre-eminently the objects of British resentment, and when their names were disclosed by the publication of the declaration, they were immediately pointed out to the soldiery, to be captured and secured if possible, as victims of royal and military vengeance.

The invasion of New Jersey by the British, as was clearly anticipated, placed Mr. Hart in that condition in each of these particulars. His family, by a timely and distant retreat from their dwelling, were saved from personal violence. His farm was ravaged, his stock, which was large and valuable, became the enemy's spoil; and Mr. Hart himself compelled to find lodging where he might, never deeming it safe to remain under the same roof two nights in succession. This condition of himself and family continued until General Washington's successful march upon Trenton, and capture of the Hessians posted there, compelled the foe to evacuate New Jersey.

Although he did not live to see the war terminated by an acknowledgment of American Independence, yet he survived

long enough to see a brighter prospect open to his country, giving strong indications, if not assurance, that the object for which he had suffered and sacrificed so much, would be achieved. Contemplating with pleasing anticipations the opening prospect of a political regeneration of the nation, and steadily pursuing the way of holiness, by a faithful discharge of his daily duties to God, and his fellow men, he calmly waited for the summons, which he daily expected to call him home. At length that summons arrived, and found him prepared. In the year 1780 he closed his useful and honorable life.



### ABRAHAM CLARK.

The gentleman whose name stands at the head of this article, was a native of New Jersey, born in the borough of Elizabethtown, on the fifteenth of February, 1726. He was the only child of his parents, who were farmers; and to him their patrimony descended regularly from his first American ancestor, who settled upon it. He was educated to the business of agriculture, which his predecessors had followed; but having a slender constitution, he did not pursue it.

He devoted his early years to study, and became a practical surveyor; and was employed in the business of surveyor and conveyancer. He also paid considerable attention to the study of law. He did not enter professionally into the practice of law; but by his acquaintance with the science, he became very useful as a counsellor among his neighbors; and his services which were much sought after, were rendered gratuitously. For this he was highly esteemed by his neighbors, and it procured him the enviable title of the "poor man's counsellor."

Under the colonial government, Mr. Clark had held the office of sheriff of the county of Essex, and also that of clerk of the general assembly. Of the various offices which he held in the province, while it was under the royal government, he discharged the several duties with fidelity. But when the question was presented for his consideration, either to submit to the oppressive measures of the parent government, or to resist, and stand boldly in defence of the just constitutional rights of the colonies, his patriotic love of country left him no

grounds for hesitation. He felt the allegiance which was due to his country ; and he decided to espouse its cause, and stand or fall with it. He devoted the remainder of his life to the public interests. He stepped forward in the rank of her first citizens, and became one of the chief actors in the important scenes, which appalled many less firm and resolute men, whose wishes were on the side of the country.

After the state of the country became so alarming, that it was deemed necessary to institute committees of vigilance and public safety, and to resort to other means of protection against the influence of the existing royal governments, and their adherents, the tories, Mr. Clark was placed by his fellow citizens on several such committees, but especially on that of public safety ; as a member of which he soon became distinguished for his activity and watchfulness. He omitted no exertions for promoting the rising spirit of opposition among the people, and for increasing that patriotic energy, which was essential for ensuring success to the cause in which he was engaged.

His distinguished activity and important services in promoting the common interest, attracted the attention of the community, and pointed him out as worthy of their confidence, to serve them on a more conspicuous theatre. Consequently in 1776, he was appointed together with Hart, Hopkinson and Witherspoon, to represent New Jersey in the general congress. Their instructions were ample, and caused them no embarrassment when the question of independence came up for decision ; for that subject was explicitly recognized in them, giving them full power to unite with the delegates from other colonies, in effecting a separation from the government of Great Britain. To that memorable act he gave his cordial assent ; and in doing it committed to the hazard of an uncertain result, his life, his family, and his property. His first appointment to congress was in June, and his second in November, of 1776 ; and he was annually returned a member of that body until 1783, with a single exception only. During that long term of service, he, like all his fellow patriots of that assembly, was actively employed in the service of the country, which was then struggling for political existence.

After the return of peace, he seems to have retired from congress for some years. But in 1788, he was again brought forward by his countrymen, and took his seat again in the general congress.

During the time of his absence from congress, he was a member of the state legislature, in which he maintained a leading influence.

After the close of the revolutionary war, when the nation was almost without a government, popular commotions were excited in New Jersey, of a kindred spirit with those in Massachusetts, although they did not extend, as in the latter state, to insurrection and civil war. Against these, and the claims of those who favored them, Mr. Clark, at the hazard of his personal safety, opposed his influence in an open and decided manner.

He opposed also the commutation of pay to the officers of the army. The act of congress proposing it, caused great popular commotion through the whole country, and excited strong opposition to the measure. On the propriety of it, eminent men were found on both sides of the question. The objection to it probably arose from the impoverished condition of the people, who had been drained of their means of subsistence by the long and burdensome war of the revolution. Mr. Clark was honest and conscientious in the course he took.

He early saw the insufficiency of the old confederation for the necessities of the country in a time of peace, and exerted himself to procure a more efficient government, better adapted to the national wants. One thing which especially urged him to this, was the conduct of the legislature of New York, in passing laws for levying duties, and collecting revenue on vessels of other states, which visited her ports. When a convention was resolved upon to frame a new constitution, in 1787, he was chosen a delegate for New Jersey, but did not join that assembly, having been prevented by ill health. He was opposed to the constitution, as it came from the convention; but subsequent amendments having removed his objections, he became its friend, and advocated its adoption.

He was a candidate for election to the first congress under the new constitution, but failed. He was then appointed by the legislature, a commissioner for settling the accounts of the state with the United States of America, which had been contracted during the war. This was an arduous service. He held the office, and discharged its duties, until the next choice of representatives to congress; when being a candidate, he was elected, and took his seat in the second congress under the federal government, and under the presidency of General Washington. He was re-elected to the same office until near the close of his life.

Constitutionally Mr. Clark was ardent. He zealously supported whatever he conscientiously believed was right. But his ardent temperament predisposed him to be a warm partisan; and such he manifested to be himself on several occasions. He zealously favored "Mr. Madison's discriminating resolutions" in favor of French commerce, which he introduced into congress a short time previous to the nomination, by President Washington, of Mr. Jay, as minister to Great Britain. He also laid a resolution before congress for suspending all intercourse with Great Britain, until she had made compensation to American citizens for injuries they had sustained by the British cruisers, and delivered up the western posts, according to the stipulation of the treaty of peace. But neither of those measures was sanctioned by congress, though warmly discussed, according to the party feelings of that period, which the French revolution had occasioned in the United States. The wisdom of the president suggested a different course; and Mr. Jay having successfully pursued it, by negotiating a treaty with England, the United States were, for that time, saved from the evils of a war with which they were threatened.

During his public life, Mr. Clark seems to have acted with honest conviction, and disinterested motives. He had two sons, who held commissions in the American army, who were captured by the British, and confined in the Jersey Prison Ship, during a part of their captivity; and their sufferings were severe; but a representation to congress, by causing a retaliation on a British officer, soon produced a mitigation of their severity.

Mr. Clark retired from public life when congress adjourned in June, 1794, and in the autumn fell a victim to a stroke of the sun, of which he died in the sixty-ninth year of his age and was buried in the church yard of Rahway.

Thus closed the life of a man, who

" Firm and decided as a patriot,  
Zealous and faithful as a friend to the public  
He loved his country,  
And adhered to her cause  
In the darkest hours of her struggles  
Against oppression."\*

\* Inscription on his monument.

## PENNSYLVANIA.



## ROBERT MORRIS.

THE gentleman, on whose memoirs we now enter, in the important services he rendered to this country in her struggle for establishing her liberty and independence, stands second only to Washington. Indeed, it might almost be doubted, whether the contest could have been brought to a successful close, if the nation had not enjoyed the benefit of his active and powerful mind, and his extraordinary financial talents. His wisdom, skill, and activity, in a short period, raised the desponding spirit of the states from a depression verging on despair, to a reviving prosperity, and a cheering prospect of ultimate success, which appeared at the time almost miraculous. He seems to have been qualified for that particular juncture, and entirely educated for the sphere he occupied. And it may be repeated, without fear of contradiction, that the inhabitants of the United States are under greater obligations to Robert Morris, than to any other individual, except the Father of his country.

Robert Morris was a native of England, born in Lancashire, in January, 1733. His father was a respectable merchant in Liverpool, who was extensively engaged in the colonial trade, particularly the American. He came to this country while his son was but a child, and established himself in Oxford, on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, leaving his son in the care of his grandmother. After he had become settled, he sent to England for his son, who arrived at his father's residence, when he was but thirteen years of age. His advantages for obtaining an education were very limited. He was placed at a school in Philadelphia. But the qualifications of his instructor were imperfect, and his advantages for improvement were, consequently, of an inferior grade. On one occasion, having been reproved by his father, for his slow progress in learning, he replied "Why, Sir, I have learned all that he could teach me."

Young Morris was left, like his colleague Clymer, an ot

phan early in life. His father was cut off in the midst of his prosperity in the following manner. He had, on the arrival of a ship from Liverpool, of which he was appointed an agent by the foreign owner, invited a large party of his friends to dine on board of her. Just as he was prepared to leave the scene of festivity, to return on shore, the commander, to honor the occasion, fired a salute. A wad from one of the guns struck Mr. Morris on his arm, which inflicted a wound that mortified, and caused his death. This occurred about two years after young Morris arrived in America, and when he was about fifteen years old. His father had placed him in the counting room of Mr. Charles Willing, one of the first merchants in Philadelphia. By the fidelity of his conduct he soon acquired the confidence and esteem of his master; and by his activity and intelligence in conducting the business of the house, he not only manifested his superior capacity in mercantile transactions, but added to the prosperity of the connection, by some speculations, the responsibility of which he assumed in the absence of his principals. The address of Mr. Willing to him, when on his death-bed, furnishes a strong and unequivocal evidence of his esteem for Morris's character and conduct. Shortly before he expired, Morris being present, he thus addressed him, "Robert, always continue to act as you have done."

In 1754, Mr. Morris formed a connection in mercantile business with Mr. Thomas Willing. He was the acting partner in that firm, which continued till 1793, (a period of thirty-nine years;) and which soon became one of the first commercial houses in Philadelphia; and their importations from England were very extensive. Yet, notwithstanding the loss they must sustain by agreeing to a non-importation compact, when the interest of the colonies required the sacrifice, to counteract the designs of the British ministry, this sacrifice was at once cheerfully made on the altar of his country. He not only signed an agreement not to import from Great Britain, but was very active and influential in prevailing on others, who were more cautious and timid, to unite in the same measure. He readily came into every plan that was proposed for resisting the encroachments of the British government on the rights of the colonists; and such was his liberal patriotism, that he would not suffer his private interest to militate against the common interest of his countrymen.

*If he ever indulged a hope that an open war with Great*

Britain might be avoided, from the passing of the "Stamp act," till American blood was shed by the British in Lexington, Massachusetts, the instant he was informed of that event it unalterably settled his determination respecting the course he would pursue. It was at a scene of conviviality, when he with a large number of gentlemen was celebrating the anniversary of St. George's Day, that the information of the Lexington battle arrived, and was communicated to the members of St. George's Society. From a scene of cheerful festivity the change was instantaneous and universal. An electrical shock could hardly have been more sudden. The company left the board instantly, and retired in a state of feeling not easily described. A few remained, and contemplated the subject with silent astonishment. It was there, in that hall, and on that occasion, that Robert Morris, Richard Peters, and their remaining associates, vowed an irrevocable determination to support revolutionary measures, and promote by every means, the liberty of the American colonies. The decision then made he invariably adhered to, through all succeeding vicissitudes in the circumstances and prospects of the colonies; and even in the most gloomy and appalling seasons his confidence in the ultimate triumph of the American cause, and his determination to persevere in the conflict, were never seen to waver for one moment. When others trembled with fearful apprehension, he stood firm; and his cheerfulness never forsook him.

Although a very popular and active leader among his fellow citizens, in vindicating their rights, Mr. Morris had not hitherto appeared on the stage of public life, where he afterwards acted a most conspicuous part in the great political drama that ensued. But on the third day of November, 1775, the legislature of Pennsylvania appointed him a delegate to the second congress. He there soon evinced such a character for talents, information, and untiring activity, that he became one of the most influential and efficient members of that dignified assembly. One of the first marks of distinction conferred on him was an appointment on the secret committee, of which he acted as chairman. The duties which devolved on that committee, were of immense importance to the ultimate success of the American cause. It belonged to them to import arms and ammunition to supply the army. Soon after this, he was placed on a committee to devise ways and means for providing a naval armament, to consist of such a number of ships as they could furnish, with the means they



could command. After that committee presented their report, and the report was accepted, he was designated on the committee for carrying it into execution.

Mr. Morris's extensive knowledge of mercantile and commercial business brought him forward, at an early period of his public life, as an able assistant in supervising the finances of the government. But it was not until a later period, when his services in that department became so important to the United States, that he stood so deservedly high as one of the most efficient agents, in securing the great objects of the revolutionary conflict. In the spring of 1776, he was specially commissioned to negotiate bills of exchange, and to endorse them, to procure revenue for the government; and congress engaged to indemnify him against eventual loss, by his thus becoming responsible.

He was returned a delegate to congress a second time, for Pennsylvania, in July, 1776, fourteen days after the great question of American Independence was settled in that body.

At that dark period, when the British army was passing without resistance through New Jersey; when General Washington, with a small half starved, half naked, inefficient, disheartened army, was retreating before the enemy, without the power of meeting him in the field, to check his advance on Philadelphia; when congress had to withdraw to a place of safety, to hold their deliberations; "when every face gathered blackness, and the stoutest men's hearts were failing them for fear;" when deep gloom and despondency marched over the country, suggesting the apprehension that all was lost, and that the country would soon have to submit at discretion, to a proud, conquering foe; at that very time, and on the very day that congress was compelled to withdraw from Philadelphia. Mr. Morris still, and almost alone, maintained his confidence; and evinced it by negotiating a loan of ten thousand dollars for the use of the marine committee; depending on the guarantee of congress for his indemnification, at a moment when it was extremely doubtful whether that body would have an existence at the end of a fortnight. In that most critical time, he did more to prevent the occurrence of all those awful calamities with which the country was then threatened, by his single agency, than all the other public men in the nation. It was he who procured indispensable means for enabling General Washington to bring his small force into an action, by which the progress of the enemy was arrested, the *rits of the American troops reanimated, new hopes raised,*

and a new confidence inspired in the whole community. This all turned on the pecuniary aid which he procured for the commander in chief, by means of which he carried his plans into operation, and without which he could have effected nothing.

Mr. Morris was one of the committee which was left to remain in Philadelphia, with almost unlimited discretionary powers, when congress, fleeing before an approaching enemy, retired to Baltimore. He placed his family in the country for safety, but took lodgings himself with a friend in the city. It was in these circumstances the following interesting occurrence took place :—

The enemy, before whom General Washington had been obliged to retreat, was encamped on the opposite shore of the Delaware. His little army was at a place now called New Hope. The enemy was able to obtain an accurate knowledge of his position and circumstances ; while he, for the want of money, could learn nothing respecting theirs. He was meditating an attack on the enemy, but could make none of the calculations indispensable to his operations, without a specified sum in specie. In these circumstances, he addressed a letter to Robert Morris, stating those particulars. The communication was brought from the general to Mr. Morris, by a confidential messenger. It reached him at a time when the inhabitants of the city had generally retired from it for safety. This fact rendered the prospect of procuring the sum almost hopeless. After receiving the despatch, he confined himself to his counting room, revolving the question, by what means he might be able to furnish the aid so indispensable to the commander in chief, until the time for closing it, and retiring to his lodgings. Gloom and depression for once gathered over his spirits. He discovered not the source of relief ; when passing towards his home, he casually met a gentleman of the society of Friends, with whom he was acquainted, and who also placed the most entire confidence in his integrity. This gentleman inquired of Mr. Morris for the news. He replied, "The most important news is, I require a certain sum in specie, and must have it." The *Friend* thought for a moment, when Mr. Morris continued, "your security is to be my note and my honor." "Robert thou shalt have it," the *Friend* replied. The specie was furnished, and sent immediately to General Washington. This loan of the "Friend," to Mr. Morris, and by him borrowed for his country, on his own credit, enabled General Washington to obtain

the victory at Trenton, which produced such an auspicious change in the circumstances of the country from despondency, to a cheering hope and animation. In March, 1777, Mr Morris was chosen a third time, by the legislature of Pennsylvania, to represent that state in the general congress.

"The secret committee" was dissolved during this year, and the committee of commerce substituted in its place. Of this committee Mr. Morris was a most prominent and efficient member.

In this year, in the month of November, he was selected, in connection with Mr. Gerry and Mr. Jones, to repair to headquarters, and in a private and confidential interview with General Washington, to devise and consider of the best means for conducting a winter campaign with vigor, and in the most successful manner; and also, in concurrence with the commander in chief, to direct all such measures for its prosperity and success, as might be demanded by the circumstances of the public service. His fiscal talents were almost constantly in exercise for the benefit of the country; and in that branch of the public business, it is acknowledged he had not his equal, at any time in the congress, while he was a member of that assembly, although it embraced a large share of the first talents of the country for wisdom and patriotism.

It is universally acknowledged that Robert Morris possessed talents, such as the country at that particular juncture stood in need of, which were of the first and highest order; and his patriotism was of an equally elevated character. The whole of his time, and all his mental faculties, were zealously devoted to his country's service; and his commercial credit abroad, than which none in the country stood higher, or was more extensive, he often dedicated to the public service. Provisions were furnished and pecuniary aid procured in great emergencies, by his individual exertions, and on his own private responsibility, applied to the public benefit, when the want of them was most pressing and urgent; and when the government were unable otherwise to procure them. One instance, in proof of the correctness of this remark, shall be now stated, on the high authority of the late venerable Judge Peters, of Pennsylvania, who was, at the time referred to, placed at the head of the war department. He remarks, "that in 1779, or 1780, tired of the most distressing years of the war, General Washington wrote to him a most alarming account of the prostrate condition of the military stores, and enjoined his immediate exertions to supply

the deficiency. There were no musket cartridges, but those in the men's boxes; and they were wet; of course, if attacked, a retreat or rout was inevitable. The board of war had exhausted all the lead which they could procure, having ordered even the spouts of houses to be melted, and had offered the equivalent in paper of two shillings specie per pound. He went in the evening of the day on which he received this letter, to a splendid entertainment given by Don Mirallis, the Spanish minister; his heart was sad, but he had the faculty of brightening his countenance, even under gloomy disasters. Mr. Morris, who was one of the guests, and knew him well, discovered some casual traits of depression. He accosted him in his usual easy and disengaged manner. "I see some cloud passing across the sunny countenance you assume. What is the matter?" After some hesitation, he showed him the general's letter, which he had brought with him. After some time, with sincere delight he called him aside, and told him that the Holkar privateer had just arrived at his wharf, with ninety tons of lead, which she had brought as ballast. It had been landed at Martinique, and stone ballast had supplied its place; but this had been put on shore, and the lead taken in again. "You shall have my half of this fortunate supply" said he, "and there are the owners of the other half, (pointing to the gentlemen in the apartment.) But I am already under heavy personal engagements, as guarantee for the department, to those and other gentlemen. "Well," rejoined Mr. Morris, "they will take your assumption, with my guarantee." Instantly on these terms, he secured the lead, left the entertainment, sent for the proper officers, and set more than one hundred people to work during the night. Before morning a supply of cartridges was ready, and sent off to the army. Many more such occurrences might be related."

At this distance of time, it would hardly seem possible, that a man of such nobleness of soul, such exalted patriotism, often manifested in the most disinterested manner, could become a subject of suspicion and aspersion; but such was the fact. Robert Morris was assailed on the floor of congress hall by a member, with an impeachment of his honor and integrity. The accusation was made by Mr. Laurens, on apparently plausible grounds; but, in truth, a result of incorrect information of the manner of transacting the public business, on which the accusation was founded. It was introduced while congress was setting in Yorktown. The charge amounted to this, that the house of Willing, Morris, &c.

Co. when employed as agents, to do business for the sole benefit of the public, had availed themselves of the opportunity to make shipments in France, as private speculations, and for their own benefit, to the detriment of government, by whom they were employed. The truth was, that for greater security, the public business had been transacted ostensibly, as for their private account. But the recorded transactions on the books of the secret committee, always placed the whole concerns of that committee on a correct foundation, and might at any time have been adduced to substantiate, or obviate any charges against them, if disingenuousness or a departure from uprightness had existed. Mr. Laurens having discovered his error, afterwards magnanimously retracted the charge, and acquitted Mr. Morris entirely. But to remove all doubts from every mind, respecting their honorable and upright dealings, at his request, congress appointed a special committee to investigate the books containing an account of all the transactions of the secret committee, and report to congress. And never was a triumph more complete in any case, than was that of Willing, Morris, & Co. furnished in the report of that special committee. Mr. Morris very correctly considered, that the preservation of his honor and integrity, pure and untarnished, in the public estimation, was indispensable for performing the services devolving on him as an agent for government, for the benefit of the public; and, that if he had justly merited the imputations thrown upon his character, he had forfeited the confidence reposed in him. This he communicated to congress, when he requested the appointment of a committee to investigate the whole of his transactions in his public agency. The report of that committee was fully sanctioned by congress, and placed him on such elevated ground, as would effectually secure him against similar charges in future. But such was not the fact. During his life, however, when he thought any assault of the kind worthy of notice, and he undertook his own justification, they were all dissipated, and manifested to be unfounded, in a manner equally conclusive and satisfactory, with that improperly urged in congress at Yorktown. His reputation as a true patriot, and one of the greatest, and most disinterested benefactor of his country, will descend to posterity with a just demand on the gratitude of the American people; and with a lustre increasing in each succeeding generation.

In the year 1780, one of the most disastrous and gloomy *years of the revolutionary period*, Mr. Morris instituted a

bank in Philadelphia with the aid of other patriotic citizens, the sole object of which was to establish a credit, by means of which congress could be furnished with pecuniary accommodations for relieving a suffering and almost disbanding army. The facilities thus furnished for the public service, were large in amount, and incalculable in their results. This bank he originated, digested the plan, and when the scheme was matured, headed the list with a subscription of ten thousand pounds in Pennsylvania currency. Others, through his instrumentality, augmented the capital to three hundred and fifteen thousand pounds; the benefits of which accrued solely to the public.

Thus it was a fact, as honorable as it was unusual, that by the industry and talents of one individual, aided by a number of patriotic associates and kindred spirits, a plan was originated, matured, and put in successful operation; which enabled government in its most pressing need, and destitute of resources, to obtain and transport to the army, three millions of rations, and a large amount of other stores; at the same time the subscribers pledged themselves, that no personal or individual emolument whatever should be derived from the institution. Had this taken place in Rome, even in her most virtuous age, posterity would justly have considered it as adorning one of the fairest and most splendid eras of her history.

Mr. Morris was elected a member of congress but once more, previous to the adoption of the federal constitution. This was on the 13th of December, 1777. During the whole time that he was a member of congress, he was constantly employed in promoting the great cause in which he had embarked his all. It would be impracticable to enumerate particularly the duties he performed, and the services he rendered, within that period. But his exertions were not limited to his public offices. He labored with his fellow citizens to arouse the lukewarm, to cheer and encourage the desponding, and to stimulate the whole, to put forth their aid, to carry the struggle to a successful issue. Besides, he improved his extensive commercial correspondence abroad, for the public benefit. He had numerous friends in England, with whom he held a private correspondence; and they, being friendly to the cause of the Americans, took pains to inform him early of the measures parliament adopted, relative to the American war; and the debates in that assembly. In this way, much useful and highly important information was communicated to a collection of his friends, at their fre-

quent meetings for business; and by them it was spread widely among the citizens, and served to keep alive their spirit of opposition; which, in many instances seemed to be growing cool and languid. This practice he commenced early; even before the intercourse between the countries was suspended; and he continued it through the whole war.

Although his patriotic career had been useful and splendid before, yet it may be safely affirmed, that it was the most distinguished in 1781. It was then that he accepted an office, urged on him by congress, and given him by their unanimous vote, in which he exhibited the vast powers of his creative genius, and performed services which no other individual in the country was competent to render; services too, without which, it appears as if the cause of the United States must have failed, and the country have remained in a state of colonial vassallage. Thus immensely important to American liberty were the services of one individual.

At the time when he undertook to discharge the duties of that office, the public accounts were in a state of almost chaotic disorder; the debt was of a vast amount; the army in a starving condition; the military chest empty; the credit of the government prostrated; and even Washington's confidence was supposed to be shaken. Under these circumstances, Robert Morris assumed the superintendence of the finances of the United States. It required a Herculean effort; and that effort he applied. By himself alone, upon his own individual credit, and from his own private resources, he furnished those pecuniary supplies; without which, all the other means which the government could command, or even allure to their aid, must have proved in vain.

His great principle of conduct, he expressed to a committee of congress, in a single short sentence. It was, "to raise the public revenues by such modes as may be most easy and equal to the people, and to expend them in the most frugal, fair, and upright manner." The situation of the general government, under the old confederation, left congress little more power than a grand committee of ways and means, whose duty it was to report to the several state legislatures what they deemed necessary; and to urge them to see that the measures they reported, were executed. The several states had all the power of taxation within their control. If the states failed to comply with the recommendations of congress, to levy and collect taxes, to supply the national treasury, as was too often the fact, the national credit

must be prostrated. This had already been realized. If congress devised any plan for raising a revenue, aside from taxation by the individual states ; for instance, by collecting an impost duty on imported and prize goods, landed in the United States, it was in the power of a single state, to prevent its execution. This power was possessed equally and independently by thirteen such states. The individual consent of each must be obtained, before it could be done ; and in the most urgent and pressing emergency of the public wants, although either an imposition, and ready collection of taxes, or the power of laying and collecting an impost, would have revived and sustained the national credit, the states would do neither. The refusal of Rhode Island and Georgia prevented the last measure from being adopted, although the other states had acceded to it. Of these two resources, therefore, the superintendent of finance was wholly deprived. To revive public credit, already destroyed, would seem impossible. But this was done by Robert Morris alone. When he assumed the duties of his office, the treasury was more than two millions and an half in arrears. His maxim was, to fulfil every obligation he entered into with strict punctuality. This he adhered to in every instance in which he pledged himself. This was one means by which he raised public confidence ; and by it he was enabled to draw forth resources from the wealth of many individuals, who otherwise would not have put it into circulation. It will not be practicable in this sketch to mention more than a part of the expedients his comprehensive mind devised and adopted to excite public confidence. Yet, when congress could not obtain the loan of a thousand dollars, Robert Morris, on his individual responsibility, would, and did, obtain vast sums for the benefit of the government.

One of the principal means for effecting this, and by which he, to a great extent, succeeded in establishing a credit, from which the government derived immense benefit, was instituting the Bank of North America, already mentioned.

He devised the measure ; digested the plan ; procured the subscriptions for the stock ; and after obtaining a charter from the legislature of Pennsylvania, got the bank into operation. It was a new thing in the country, and looked at with a cautious jealousy, by moneyed men, for a time ; but the facilities which it rendered to business transactions, the confidence which was inspired in the community, by a little experience in getting the specie for its bills, whenever they



were presented for the purpose, soon quieted all solicitude on the subject; and its paper in a short time took the place of specie at par, as being more convenient. It shortly became the circulating medium through all the states; and the bank was the place of large deposits of gold and silver. But before this important aid to the funds of the government could be established and be put into operation, several difficulties were necessarily to be overcome, or rather obviated, which it is unnecessary to mention. At length, however, these were by his industry, influence, and perseverance, overcome; and in 1782, the North American Bank commenced business. The capital paid in at that time was limited; but the aid it afforded the government was of great value. This will be evident from the following statement. The bank, with a capital of but three hundred thousand dollars, within six months from its commencing business, advanced to government four hundred and eighty thousand. Although such an institution was unprecedented in the country, and it had to overcome the universal prejudice against a paper medium, which had resulted from the ruinous depreciation of the ruinous continental and state emissions, and the consequent fear that this would soon follow the course of its predecessors, it rose in its reputation, extended its credit, increased its strength, and diffused its reviving influence on the public confidence throughout the extent of the country. This was the first important operation in the system of the financier; and it became the right arm of his strength, in rendering the others beneficial and prosperous. As the confidence of the public in the soundness of the bank became established, many individuals, who held specie, which they could not invest in any profitable business, situated as the country then was, deposited it in the bank for safe keeping, and thus indirectly enlarged the means for more extended accommodations.

Another part of his system was to establish a firm credit for his own private notes, that he might give the public the benefit of his individual credit. To effect this he instituted a private banking establishment, under the superintendance of Mr. Swanwick, where he displayed large piles of gold and silver coins, in the full view of all who entered the office. It might have been taken from the bank early in the morning, and returned to its vaults in the evening, and so repeated successively from day to day. But it was there in full view, till his own credit was established on the repeated application of *holders of his paper for the specie. They remained*

it; he was deemed safe, since the specie was there, and might be obtained at pleasure, by the holders of his notes. Applications for it soon ceased; his paper was good, more easy of transportation than bags of dollars; and it passed currently to a large amount, at par with gold and silver. In this manner his individual credit was an auxiliary of immense advantage to the government; by means of which he, to a great extent, fed and clothed the continental army, at a time when congress could do nothing towards it; and at a time when without this aid, the army must have been disbanded, or subsisted by forced contributions from the inhabitants. But a full detail of all his measures for supplying the necessities of the government, at that season of distress and calamity, the dread of which, caused even General Washington almost to tremble, would demand a volume, and a full history of the two last years of the revolutionary war.

If it were not demonstrable by official record, posterity would hardly be made to believe, that the campaign of 1781, which resulted in the capture of Cornwallis, and virtually closed the revolutionary war, was sustained wholly on the credit of an individual merchant.

It is well known that the plan had been formed by General Washington, and the commander of the French allies, with their combined force, to attack the British in New York, and recover possession of that city. By the determination of Count de Grasse, not to hazard his heavy ships in the bay of New York, and to sail for the Chesapeake, the plan was disconcerted. At the time when intelligence of this fact reached General Washington, Mr. Morris and Mr. Peters were at head-quarters, on a secret mission to the general. He, on receiving the intelligence, was for a little time agitated and disconcerted; but his clear and comprehensive mind at once resolved to turn the disappointment to the advantage of America in the southern states.

Early in the morning, after the determination of the Count de Grasse was communicated to General Washington, at the beating of the reveille, Messrs. Morris and Peters were awakened by a messenger from the commander in chief, requesting their immediate attendance. The circumstance being somewhat unusual, they immediately complied with the request. It was then that they witnessed his agitation, which the total derangement of his plans, by the determination of the French admiral had caused. The event was of a nature to excite strong feelings. Such feelings were excited in the

breast of Washington ; insomuch that he exclaimed against the breach of faith on the part of Count de Grasse. At the usual hour of breakfast, they found him as composed as if nothing unusual had taken place, and calmly busied in making out his estimates of what supplies he should want for his southern expedition, in pursuit of Cornwallis. Within that very short lapse of time had his comprehensive mind suggested that decisive enterprise, and entered on an estimate of the various particulars requisite for accomplishing it. He immediately inquired of Mr. Peters, (who was at the head of the war department,) " Well, what can you do for me, under this unexpected disappointment ?" Mr. Peters replied, " With money, every thing ; without it, nothing ; and immediately turned with a look of anxiety towards the financier. Mr. Morris instantly said, " I understand you ; but I must know the amount you require." Before the hour of dinner the amount was placed before him. Mr. Morris informed the general, that he had not any possible means of furnishing money to that amount ; and that he should be compelled to rely on credit—his own individual credit solely ; and that he could decide whether he thought it safe to depend solely on that credit which it would be necessary for him to risk. General Washington immediately remarked ; " The measure is inevitable ; and therefore resolved on ; and I must pursue it at all hazards." Thus, in the course of a few hours, was the expedition devised, resolved on, and the means necessary for carrying it forward put into a course of provision, by these three men ; and this immediately after having experienced one of the most deranging disappointments which occurred during the whole war. The disappointment that preceded it was sudden, unlooked for, and perplexing to the commander in chief. It led to the adoption of a plan, the most eventful, glorious, and happy in its results—the triumphant termination of the struggle for American Independence, which it established for ever. The usual commission paid to mercantile brokers, on the sums which Mr. Morris obtained for the United States, on his own individual responsibility, when the credit of the national government could not have obtained ten thousand—nay one thousand dollars, would alone have amounted to an immense fortune. A more magnanimous, disinterested patriot has rarely, if ever arisen in any country.

It may be affirmed, without any fear of refutation, that, without the military talents of Washington, and the financial talents of Morris, mutually co-operating to effect the object,

the Independence of the United States, though declared in July, 1776, could not have been achieved and secured.

After the war was terminated, and he had retired from office, he was chosen once or twice, to represent Philadelphia in the legislature of Pennsylvania. And when it was determined to call a convention of the states, to form the federal constitution under which we now live, Mr. Morris was returned a member from Pennsylvania.

After the adoption of the constitution and the election of a congress, to organize the government, Mr. Morris was chosen a member of the first senate of the United States for Pennsylvania.

General Washington, when about to select his cabinet, offered Mr. Morris the office of secretary of the treasury, and urged his acceptance. But this he declined. He was requested by the president to name the candidate. He instantly mentioned Alexander Hamilton.

Mr. Morris, in his management of the pecuniary concerns of the United States, under the old confederation, practically experienced its inefficiency so effectually, in respect to all great national purposes, that he became early impressed with the indispensable necessity of a different constitution of government, to conduct the national concerns. His opinions expressed from time to time, embraced many of the leading principles, which were afterwards incorporated in the federal constitution. But he had witnessed such feelings on the subject in the congress, among members from the different states, as almost made him despair of ever seeing it established. Yet he lived to aid in forming such a government, to see it adopted by the states, and go into operation, and then to be a member of one branch of that same government, under the administration of that great captain, by whose military talents, sustained by his own exertions, the nation was liberated from foreign dominion, and established in independence. This was pleasing to his latter years. But they were otherwise clouded with gloom.

That tide of prosperity in his private commercial transactions, which had continued to flow, almost unchecked for years, and which laid the foundation of his credit which he used so beneficially in favor of the government, probably led him to indulge to an immeasurable extent in wild speculations; it then forsook him, and involved him to such a degree that he never was able to extricate himself. Whether his unparalleled success in surmounting difficulties, when super-

intending the money concerns of the government, superadded to his extensive private commercial negotiations, had excited a species of enthusiasm, so that he thought he could accomplish impossibilities, may perhaps, admit of a doubt ; but owing to this, or some other cause, he persuaded himself that the nations of Europe would pour their population in a continual and swelling current into this now free country, to settle our wild uncultivated land ; and thus create a market which could hardly be supplied. He made purchases, which swallowed up his immense fortune, and left him still involved in inextricable embarrassment.

His academical education was limited, as we have stated ; but he had acquired much information, by his general reading, which was extensive, and by his intercourse with men of intelligence and learning ; and with commercial science, he was probably more extensively acquainted than any other man on this continent.

His style of writing is before the public, in his official communications to congress, his numerous letters to the governors of the several states, and to other correspondents. It will not be rendering him justice, if it is only acknowledged to be handsome. It is more, it is easy, flowing, forcible, and often eloquent. That he possessed native powers of mind of a high order, will hardly be questioned by any one who is qualified to judge correctly.

His hospitality was almost unbounded ; and his liberality in aiding public institutions for beneficial purposes, and merit, striving to rise from indigence and obscurity to usefulness and respectability, are well known to persons now living, and to some who experienced his generous aid and patronage when commencing business in early life.

For many years, he was afflicted with the asthma, a disease distressing in its nature and effects. With such an infirmity oppressing him, and often suddenly attacking him with great violence, it is difficult to perceive how he could possibly discharge the active duties he was called in person to perform. Exercise was his specific, which he applied for temporary relief. And this he often found efficacious in a few minutes.

Worn down by years of public labor and private misfortunes, Mr. Morris yielded up his life on the eighth day of May, 1806, in the seventy-third year of his age.

He was married to Miss Mary White, a sister of Bishop White, on the second day of March.

It may be remarked as rather a singular fact, that three of the most efficient among the agents, in securing the establishment of American Independence, after it had been declared by congress, were unfurnished with a classical education; Washington, Franklin, and Morris; men who, in their respective spheres of action, have rarely been equalled, and never surpassed.



### BENJAMIN RUSH

DOCTOR RUSH claims a descent from a republican parentage of considerable distinction on the eastern side of the Atlantic. His great grandfather was an officer in the army of Oliver Cromwell. He had the command of a company of horse in the service of that extraordinary man. He was a native of England; and at the death of Cromwell he left his native country, and emigrated to Pennsylvania, about the commencement of its settlement by William Penn.

His great grandson Benjamin was born in the township of Berberry, situated about twelve miles northeast of Philadelphia, on the twenty-fourth day of December, 1745. At the early age of six years, he and a brother were, by the death of their father, left entirely to the care of their mother. If we are allowed to judge of her qualifications and fitness for such an interesting and important charge, by his character and eminent usefulness in his after life, the decision must exalt her to high eminence in our estimation. According to that standard, few men whom our country has produced will hold a rank superior to Doctor Rush; and very few indeed, whose moral character and consistent conduct, will reflect back on their parents a more desirable reputation.

It was the settled wish of his mother to furnish him with a classical education, but she found the income from her farm, which was all that she possessed, inadequate for the purpose. To remedy this she removed into Philadelphia, and commenced some commercial business; by the fruits of which, and a very frugal economy, she was enabled to accomplish her design. She undertook herself to instruct him in the elements of his native language; and then, when he was but nine years old, she placed him under the care of the

Reverend Doctor Findley, who had married her sister. At that time he resided in Nottingham, Maryland, where he superintended an academy, or grammar school, of a good reputation, from which he was, at a subsequent period, called to the presidency of Princeton College, in New Jersey. The advantages he enjoyed under the care of this eminently pious, learned, and excellent man, were of immense value to young Rush, and having been applied at that time of his life, when impressions are made on the mind with an indelible force, their effects were displayed in the most desirable manner during the whole of his life. When speaking of President Findley, as a Christian, as a divine, as a faithful, pious minister, or as an instructor of youth, there is little danger of transcending his real merits. With him the dictates of conscience would, in every case, supply an adequate motive to a faithful discharge of his duties to the youths committed to his care; yet, in the instance of young Rush, there were superadded the interested affection he felt for his fatherless nephew, stimulated by that regard, which teachers almost always feel for youths who possess amiable dispositions faithfully apply to their studies, and evince a genius and powers of intellect beyond their years. In this promising youth, Doctor Findley, had the happiness of witnessing all these, holding forth a promise in his mature years which he confidently expected would be realized. The result verified his expectations.

When he was qualified for admission to college, he was removed from the care of his excellent preceptor at Nottingham, to Princeton College, and placed under the superintending care of the Reverend Samuel Davies, the then president of that seminary. He took his degree at that college in 1766, at the age of about sixteen years. The affectionate guardianship of two such eminent men for wisdom, piety, and learning, as Doctors Findley and Davies, was of inestimable value to young Rush.

Having finished his collegiate course, he was inclined to pursue the profession of the law; but, influenced by the advice of Doctor Findley, and some pecuniary considerations rendering it expedient, he was induced to study medicine. He began his professional education under the direction of Doctor Redman, a gentleman of great eminence in the city of Philadelphia, who superintended his studies with much care and fidelity, and afterwards generously patronized him with the sincerity of a friend in his practice.

In his whole course, from his preparatory studies, while in college, and in his medical education, his close and constant application insured to him the favor of his several teachers in a high degree.

The life of Doctor Rush may be contemplated to the best advantage, in a threefold point of view—as a physician, as a statesman and as a writer. In this brief sketch, however, brevity must be observed on each of these heads.

*First.* We shall take notice of him as a medical man, as a practitioner, and an instructor of medicine.

Under the instruction of Doctor Redman he spent six years in such a severe application to his preparatory studies, that he has recorded concerning himself, that he could not enumerate more than *two days* of absence from his proper business. If this may be regarded as but a fair specimen of his application, it will not be difficult to account for his high attainments in the science of his profession, and his almost unequalled success in practice. A man possessing an original mind, like that of Doctor Rush, cultivated and improved with such faithfulness, and such distinguished advantages, could not fail, in due time, of appearing illustrious, even among great men.

After having availed himself of the best advantages his country afforded, for improvement in his professional course, he, in 1766, went to Great Britain, and spent two years in attending the lectures and the hospital practice in that medical school. He then repaired to London, and spent the winter of 1768, in attending upon the hospitals and medical lectures which that metropolis furnished. The summer following he repaired to Paris, and derived signal advantages for increasing his stock of useful knowledge, which that celebrated school of the arts and sciences furnished him. Having thus been favored with opportunities for improvement, such as very few young men of that period, on the American side of the Atlantic could obtain, Doctor Rush returned to his native land, bearing the title of “*Doctor of Medicine* ;” his diploma of which was conferred at Edinburgh. On his return, thus qualified, he settled in Philadelphia, where he had to encounter a competition with men of the first reputation in the country, already known to that community, and men who had been firmly established in practice for many years. Notwithstanding all the embarrassing considerations and causes he had to struggle with, he was, even in the first year of his practice, associated with



Doctors Shippen, Morgan, Bond, and Kuhn, as a professor in the Medical College of Philadelphia; and although comparatively young, called by them to aid in the most difficult and important consultations which occurred in their professional labors.

His natural and acquired endowments he carried into society with such pleasing manners and graceful demeanor, as produced, almost universally, an impression highly favorable to himself among the citizens of Philadelphia. His society was much esteemed by all the companies he frequented. His mental powers were of a superior grade. To these he added the polished address and manners of a gentleman, and a conversation both pleasing and instructive. His deportment in the sick room was prepossessing, by the affectionate manner with which he addressed his patients, and the strong interest he manifested for their recovery. In these he showed no difference between the rich, who could amply reward him, and the poor, whose only requital was their cordial gratitude and their prayers.

From this time he advanced rapidly in a course of prosperous and successful practice, uninterrupted by any remarkable events, until the memorable epidemic yellow fever of 1793. His celebrity as an instructor of pupils, and his lectures, annually gathered youths from every part of the United States; who were engaged in acquiring medical science, that they might enjoy the advantages of his instruction. But the occurrence of that awfully afflicting and desolating scourge, was the occasion of presenting his character to public view, as a skillful physician, a philanthropist, and a Christian, in a manner pre-eminently distinguished. After the appearance of that disease, which it was soon ascertained, baffled all the remedies which were applied, and the sick were hastened in vast numbers to the grave; when every mind was panic-struck, while contemplating the sick and dying, and trembling for the dreaded event of each succeeding hour; when the physicians, taught by melancholy experience the imbecility of their own resistance to the gigantic destroyer of their fellow men, were fleeing from the unavailing conflict to places of imagined safety, and seeking security for themselves in an uninfected atmosphere; then it was that Doctor Rush, with a magnanimity worthy of all praise, and a Christian devotedness to his duty, resolved, that whatever physicians might do, if they all fled, he would remain in the scene of desolation, and do all in his power to alleviate the

sufferings of the afflicted, and contend with the destroyer till he was vanquished, or himself should fall in the conflict. He did remain in the midst of gloom and desolation ; and devoted his whole time and services, and those of his family, to the cause of benevolence, among the numerous sick, helpless, and dying, until he was disabled for a time by a serious attack of the disease. By means of this noble resolution and conduct, many valuable lives were preserved, which in all human probability would have fallen a sacrifice, and swelled the number of victims to the most destructive epidemic fever that ever visited any city in the United States.

Doctor Rush, when many of the resident physicians had hastened from the scene of danger, and left the inhabitants to seek for medical aid where they might, called some of his brethren and pupils together, to consider the question of their duty in that urgent emergency. He stated that when gentlemen entered into the medical profession and they voluntarily assumed responsibilities and duties to society, which depended on them for aid in their necessities, which they were obliged conscientiously to perform. The present was a case in which the physicians of the city were bound in duty to remain at their post, however dangerous they might apprehend it to be. The community were already justly alarmed. If they saw physicians fleeing from the danger, it would enhance their fears. Fear was one powerful predisposing cause of taking it ; and in this instance would produce the most baneful effects upon the sick, by depressing their spirits, and banishing the hope of recovery. It would most probably prove, indirectly, the cause of many deaths in that way, as well as by depriving the sick of the aid which they needed, if the physicians sought their own safety by flying from the field. He requested those present to continue in the city, and as many as were willing, to signify it at that time. "As for myself," he added, "I am determined to remain, and render all the aid I can. I may fall a victim to the epidemic ; and so may you, gentlemen. But I prefer, since I am placed here by Divine Providence, to fall in performing my duty, if such must be the consequence of staying on the ground, than to secure my life by fleeing from the post of duty allotted in the providence of God. I will remain, if I remain alone." He did remain in the city, together with some of his noble spirited pupils, and a few of his medical brethren, and labored uninterruptedly night and day, for the benefit of his suffering and distressed fellow citizens, until he was attacked by the fever.

Even then he did not remit in his labors, but according to his remaining strength, he prescribed for those who gathered around his bed for his counsel and advice. Some of his benevolent pupils fell victims to the disease, while magnanimously laboring to preserve the lives of others.

The fame of Doctor Rush, became established in Europe and America; and he is remembered with gratitude and respect.

As a teacher of medicine, his reputation was deservedly high, and widely extended. He had many private pupils from the commencement of his practice. His public lectures as a professor, in several chairs which he filled, were the most popular of any delivered at that period in this country. His fame drew medical students to the school in Philadelphia, from every part of the United States, and some from foreign countries. In the nine last years, his private pupils amounted to fifty; and in 1812, those in the class who attended his lectures, amounted to four hundred and thirty. It has been estimated, that during the professional life of Doctor Rush, he gave instruction to more than two thousand pupils.

He was first appointed professor of chemistry, in the college of Philadelphia, in 1769. In 1789, he was professor of the theory and practice of medicine. In this he succeeded Doctor Morgan.

In the medical college of Pennsylvania, he held the professorship of the institutes of medicine, and of chemical practice. And on the resignation of Doctor Kuhn in 1796, he took by appointment, the professorship of the practice of physic; the three last mentioned offices, he retained through his life, and performed the arduous duties which they required, with his usual characteristic industry and application.

In addition to these, he was during many years one of the physicians to the Philadelphia hospital, and did much to elevate its reputation, promote its interests, and enlarge the boundaries of its utility.

Having thus summarily taken a view of Doctor Rush as a physician, in the two capacities of a practitioner and instructor of medicine, we now proceed to present him in the second particular—as a statesman.

In principle he was a republican; as such he was held in high estimation by his enlightened contemporary patriots. Generally he harmonized in sentiment with the distinguished politicians of the age in which he flourished. To promote *the cause of American liberty and independence*, he not only

devoted his talents as a writer, to rouse the spirit of his countrymen, and prepare their minds for declaring and maintaining independence; but he exerted himself to engage others to come forward in behalf of the same cause. His political character was so fully established in his native state, and his sentiments so generally known, that when the places of those members of congress from Philadelphia, who declined voting for independence, were vacated by their withdrawing from them, he was immediately selected by their legislature, with his colleagues, to fill them, and set their names to that instrument, on behalf of Pennsylvania, although they were not appointed till after the vote had passed in congress, on the fourth day of July, 1776. In support of the independence of the country, as that which was to prove the foundation of her future glory and prosperity, he cordially devoted his influence and his talents, during the war of the revolution.

In the year 1777, he received an appointment by congress, to the office of physician general of the military hospitals for the middle department.

After the federal constitution was submitted to the states for their consideration and decision, he was chosen a member of the convention of Pennsylvania, by which it was adopted.

After the federal government went into operation, Doctor Rush retired from all active participation in public life. The only office he held, was that of president of the mint; the duties of which interfered but little with the performance of those connected with his profession, while it furnished some addition to his income. He held it for the term of fourteen years.

Although in the political department in which he was called to act, there was nothing that furnished occasion for splendid achievements, yet the services he rendered to the country were numerous and valuable; and not the less so, for being of that humble, unobtrusive character, which will not necessarily emblazon his name on the page of history. With the ardent feelings of an enlightened and inflexible patriot, he espoused the cause of his country; and with a zeal, worthy of such a character, he devoted his best talents to the promotion of its highest interests. And while he is esteemed as a benefactor of mankind, in the valuable contributions he has made for improving and advancing the medical science, he will be esteemed no less so by future generations, who will learn his real merits from history, for the benefits he conferred on his fellow citizens, in

the valuable services he rendered his country, as a politician and a statesman.

As a writer, if the various and important subjects on which he wrote, the easy, and pleasing style in which he clothed his valuable thoughts, the clearness of his own perceptions, the impressions his ideas made on the minds of his readers, and the aggregate amount of his publications, Doctor Rush will be allowed to sustain a rank, inferior to few American writers. As a medical author, he hitherto has stood confessedly at the head. If there are any persons who can read his account of the yellow fever, which visited Philadelphia in 1793, without having the strong emotions of their hearts powerfully excited, we think such readers are not to be envied.

He was a member of numerous useful societies, literary, and others, both in this country, and in foreign lands, and an officer in several in the United States.

In the American Society for the abolition of slavery, he held the office of president. He was also president of the Philadelphia Medical Society; a vice president of the Philadelphia Bible Society; and one of the vice presidents of the American Philosophical Society. This list comprises but a small part of the literary honors which were conferred on him, both in this country and in several of the countries in Europe. So that if the estimation of his literary character may be correctly inferred from the number and variety of testimonials he received of this description, the standing of Doctor Rush must be highly distinguished.

His cultivated mind, enlarged by Christian benevolence, and warmed by evangelical piety, induced him to patronize benevolent and charitable institutions, for meliorating the condition of mankind. In the year 1786, he formed the Philadelphia Dispensary; the first institution of the kind that had an existence in the United States. The example has since been followed in several of the large commercial cities, north and south of Philadelphia. These valuable institutions, have already been productive of much benefit to the afflicted; and they will continue useful for ages to come, while they redound to the honor of their founders and patrons.

Doctor Rush was one of the principal founders of Dickerson College, at Carlisle in Pennsylvania.

He was a warm and eloquent advocate for establishing common schools, in behalf of which he wrote and published some interesting and instructive essays. But not to enlarge; *it will be proper to close this memoir by remarking, that the*

crowning glory of Doctor Rush's character, and without which it would have been less useful, and less venerable, was his firm belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible; and both in his writings and public lectures, avowed that belief at a time when infidelity was fashionable with men in high standing, and evinced his sincerity, by an uniform reverential observance of the sacred institutions of the gospel.

His life, which was filled up with active usefulness to mankind, was terminated on the nineteenth day of April, 1813, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. As a testimony of the respect and esteem which were entertained for him, by his fellow citizens of Philadelphia, it is proper to state, that during his last illness, his dwelling was continually thronged by multitudes who were anxious to learn the probable result of his attack. And after the result was known, the city was overcast with a general gloom. His remains were followed to the cemetery by a great number of the inhabitants of the city, as a voluntary token of the last respect to a great man, and a benefactor, who had fallen among them.



## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was born at Boston, in the colony of Massachusetts, on the 17th day of January, 1706. His father was one of the puritans, who, that he might enjoy his religious sentiments in peace, left his native land, and came to Massachusetts in 1682. Although many of his ancestors and connections were mechanics, he was not; and being unused to agriculture and commerce, he entered on the business of a soap boiler and tallow chandler, without any previous apprenticeship; and this he pursued through the remainder of his life.

His mother's name was Folger, a native of Boston.

His pious parents felt a strong desire that he might be a minister of the gospel; and put him to school early that he might begin an education which would qualify him for a preacher. But their means did not allow of his prosecuting his studies; and the plan was soon abandoned.

He early manifested an ardent desire for instruction, and gave at eight years of age, some indications of that thirst for

intellectual improvement, which he manifested through his life. His education was restricted to what he could acquire at a common school, during a very few years. He was then taken by his father into his own service, that he might learn the business he was pursuing. This however did not please Benjamin. He then entered for probation on that of a cutler. But the fee which was demanded for his apprenticeship being thought unreasonable, he left that business. His father then put him under the instruction of an elder son, to learn the trade of a printer. In every situation in which he was placed, he indulged most industriously his strong desire for acquiring knowledge. For this purpose, he spent all the time he could command in reading such books as he could procure, instead of squandering it in unprofitable amusements or idleness. He was a close observer of what he read; and he early began to apply suggestions he found in the books he perused, for the formation of his own character, and the regulation of his conduct; and some which he thus applied when he was quite young, had an important influence on his character and usefulness throughout his future life. For instance, a hint he found in a book recommending a vegetable diet, he adopted as a rule for himself; which he practised for several years. From it he derived several advantages, in promoting his health, in a saving of money, in a saving of time at his meals, which he devoted to reading, in rendering his mind clear, and in leading him to practise habits of frugality in his living.

When he was quite a lad, he expressed a strong inclination to become a sailor, and was dissuaded from it only by the decided opposition of his father.

His time at school was so limited, that he had no opportunity to acquire a knowledge of arithmetic. This deficiency he supplied by his own efforts, without the aid of any instructor.

While he continued in his brother's employment as an apprentice, he industriously improved all the time he could redeem from labor, in cultivating his mind, both by reading, and in attempts at composition. But owing to some cause, the harmony which should always exist between persons so nearly allied, was interrupted, and Benjamin resolved on leaving his brother's service. On finding it impracticable to obtain employment in Boston, if he left his brother as he wished, he resolved on quitting the place of his birth; to accomplish his purpose, he embarked on board a vessel then in the har-

bor, bound for New York ; where after a short passage he arrived, without experiencing any disaster.

After a few days spent in a fruitless search of employment in that city, he set out for Philadelphia, making the journey on foot. When he arrived in Philadelphia, he was but seventeen years old, without a friend or an acquaintance, and with but one dollar in his possession.

His first appearance on entering Philadelphia was somewhat grotesque—so much so, as to excite the attention of the people in the streets which he traversed, after leaving the boat in which he arrived in that city. With his wardrobe in his pockets, and a roll of bread under each arm, he bent his way, first through Market-street, and thence from one street to another, (it being a Sabbath morning) until he found himself in a Quaker Meeting. There he sat down, and soon fell into a sound sleep until their worship was closed. He was then kindly awakened by one of the congregation, and admonished to seek out another resting place.

There were but two printing establishments in Philadelphia, when Franklin arrived there. In one of these he soon found employment as a compositor ; here he secured the esteem of his employer by industry ; for he pushed his business during those hours, when others usually indulge in relaxation, and too often in prodigal expenses. But Franklin scrupulously observed the system of frugality he had previously begun ; and by means of these, and his habit of the strictest punctuality in all his engagements, he attracted the observation, and acquired the esteem of the public, and became a favorite among the citizens of Philadelphia.

He had written an account of his journey, and his recent adventures, to a friend at Newcastle, in Delaware. The letter containing this account, had been shown to Sir William Keith, governor of the province ; which gave him such an opinion of his merits and talents, as induced him to seek for an acquaintance with the youthful journeyman printer. He called on Franklin, and invited him to his house as a visitor, on terms of friendship, whenever it suited his convenience ; and on that occasion, took him to a neighboring inn, and partook with him of a bottle of wine, with which the governor familiarly commenced their friendship. This friendship although grateful to the feelings of Franklin, was subsequently the means of involving him in some temporary embarrassments.

In consequence of a proposal of Governor Keith, to set up



an independent establishment of his own, he made a journey to Boston, after an absence of seven months, to obtain the sanction of his father, and to visit his friends. By the advice of his father this project was relinquished; but another more extensive, soon followed from the same source; which meeting with Franklin's concurrence, led him to embark for London, to prepare the way for accomplishing it, under the governor's patronage. But his patronage being of no benefit to him, Franklin found himself again in straightened circumstances, without friends or money, three thousand miles from home, and in the metropolis of England. But here his genius did not forsake him, though embarrassed, he did not sink under his difficulties. He soon obtained employment in one of the principal printing offices in London. There he observed the same course of industry, punctuality, and economy, which he had done in Philadelphia; and the general result was similar in his new situation. He secured the confidence and esteem of his employers, and a decent subsistence for himself and was enabled to contribute to the necessities of a friend, who had accompanied him in his Transatlantic voyage, as a literary adventurer; and who, being destitute of pecuniary resources, was involved in indigence, and was kept from suffering and want by Franklin's liberality and friendship.

Wherever he was, whether in Boston, Philadelphia, or London, he pursued the same course of industry, and paid the same careful attention to the cultivation of his mind. It was during his short residence in London, that he became acquainted with, and received the flattering attentions of a number of distinguished Infidels; among whom was Lord Mandeville. This unfortunate acquaintance was the consequence of his writing and publishing a pamphlet, upon deistical metaphysics. This was a step which he afterwards condemned either from a conviction that the principles of deism were untenable, or on the ground of its having been inexpedient. Whatever were his religious principles in his riper age, it cannot be denied, that in his early years he was tinctured with the views of Hume, Voltaire, and Gibbon.

After spending about eighteen months in London, he contemplated making a tour over the European continent. From this project, however, he was diverted by a mercantile acquaintance, who was about making a voyage to America, to carry out some merchandise to Philadelphia. He proposed to take Franklin with him in the capacity of a clerk; to

which proposal he readily acceded, relinquished his intended tour of Europe, and returned to his friends in his native country. They embarked for America on the twenty-second day of July, 1726, when he was some months more than twenty years of age; and arrived at Philadelphia on the 11th of October following.

During the voyage, Franklin kept a journal of all the incidents he deemed worthy to be recorded; and drew up a set of rules for the government of his conduct through his future life. To these he ever afterwards scrupulously adhered.

His patron commenced business in Philadelphia, and took Franklin into his employment. His prospects now rapidly brightened fast; and a scene of prosperity and wealth opened before him, which was highly flattering to his youthful mind. But it was only of short duration. It was wholly obscured and closed, by the early decease of his patron and friend. This event left him again without employment, and threw him on the world once more a journeyman printer. He re-entered the service of his former employer; but continued with him only a few months. Soon after this separation, he formed a connection with another printer; and by the aid of his pecuniary means set up an establishment on their own account.

The knowledge of the art which he had acquired was superior to that of his competitors; and that combined with his assiduous industry, and attention to business, his abstaining from all irregularities common to young men, and his entire punctuality in meeting all his engagements, enabled him to obtain the confidence of the community, to extend his acquaintance, and to secure the aid of friends.

From this period, the vicissitudes of his previous life gave place to a more uniform and prosperous course. His business increased; his reputation became established; his character extensively known, and was uniformly respected and esteemed.

In 1730, he was married to a lady, whose maiden name was Read. He had paid his addresses to her before he went to England. The intimacy was suspended, and she had been married to another man in the mean time. But having become a widow, he renewed his attentions, married her, and lived with her in the enjoyment of much conjugal felicity.

As he was ever desirous of promoting scientific improvement and useful knowledge in the community, about this time, in connection with some respectable young men, he instituted a club, called The Junto; in the meetings of which

many important subjects were discussed. This club was continued for thirty years, and was followed by the Philadelphia Philosophical Society. Its influence on society was salutary in several respects, and contributed to excite a literary taste and emulation in the society in which its influence was immediately felt.

He began his almanac in 1732, under the title of "*Poor Richard's Almanac*," and continued to publish it annually for thirty years. It was a very useful and popular work. The last of the series was published in 1757. In this he collected the principal articles contained in the preceding annuals; and this was republished in several editions, and various forms, in Great Britain; and was translated into several foreign languages, and published on the continent of Europe.

About this time he printed a newspaper in Philadelphia; which, as might have been expected, sustained a respectable character, quite superior to several of its contemporaries.

By his assiduous attention to reading, in which he persevered in every situation in life, he acquired a knowledge of the Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish languages; and accomplished this almost unaided by teachers.

In the club, called "The Junto," a small collection of books was made by him for the use of the members; and this was the commencement of the Philadelphia Library. Thus Franklin became the founder of the first public library in this country.

Shortly after he commenced his newspaper, several things concurred to extend his reputation, render him popular, and increase his prosperity. He composed a pamphlet in 1729, concerning the nature and necessity of paper currency, which was a favorite subject with the public at that period. He assisted in promoting its use. This rendered him a favorite with a people predisposed to adopt the measure. He wrote, and published, several miscellaneous essays, which were read with avidity, and with much satisfaction. Such essays were less common then than in after years; and were doubtless more highly valued for that reason, in addition to their own intrinsic merit, than they would otherwise have been. He had also the public printing committed to him, by the government of Pennsylvania. These things all combined to increase the subscription list of his newspaper; and his prospect of passing from indigence to affluence, was continually and rapidly brightening.

In 1736, the general assembly of the province appointed him their clerk; and the following year they added the office of postmaster of Philadelphia. Being now relieved from the drudgery of constant labor, which a provision for his domestic necessities had till then demanded of him, by means of his official income, added to that derived from his establishment, he found leisure to devote more of his time and attention to the promotion of other objects, in which he felt a strong interest. He began his schemes of public utility by organizing fire companies; reforming the city watch; and devising and procuring the means for paving and lighting the streets of the city. "The American Philosophical Society," "The Pennsylvania University," and "The Pennsylvania Hospital," all owe their existence to Benjamin Franklin. And all the military discipline which existed in Pennsylvania, originated with him. Until his efforts in its favor, it had been entirely neglected in that province.

He commenced the publication of *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, for the British Plantations*, in 1741. This periodical was very popular, and was judiciously adapted to the taste of the public, during the time it was published. In 1742, he composed and published his treatise on the improvement of chimnies, and invented the well known stove which bears his name. From this invention he neither sought nor obtained any pecuniary benefit. He gave it to the public.

By his disinterested and persevering labor for the public good, he gained the esteem and respect of his fellow citizens; and they began to confer on him their popular favors. The governor appointed him successively a justice of the peace, and an alderman of the city; and by the corporation he was chosen a member of the common council. In 1744, he was elected a member of the provincial legislature; to which station he was annually re-elected for ten years, without intermission, and without soliciting a vote from any person.

About this time he commenced his philosophical course, which in a few years spread his fame over the civilized world, and placed him in the first rank among eminent men.

His attention to electricity was excited by some experiments exhibited by some foreigners at Boston, in 1747, when he was casually there, and witnessed their exhibitions. Having repeated them with entire success, on his return to Philadelphia, and added some others of his own devising, or he had received in some account from a friend in England, he became much attached to that study, and devoted a large

portion of his time to its cultivation. It is well known that he enlarged the science of electricity, far more than all his predecessors. He was the first man who kindled gunpowder with electricity, magnetized steel needles, melted metals, and killed animals of a considerable size by the same means. He greatly improved the Leyden Vial, by means of which he could regulate his experiments with safety, as he discovered its properties of accumulating, retaining, and throwing off any quantity of the fluid he wished. It was then that he discovered the utility of points, and the positive and negative state of electricity. Having made considerable progress in his discoveries, he conceived the idea that the electric fluid and lightning were the same. This led him to devise a plan for drawing the fluid from a thunder cloud, and discharging it into the earth. Having succeeded in his experiment with the kite, and established the principle of identity of the electric fluid and lightning, when it was published, his fame spread with great rapidity over the world, and he acquired, and ever afterwards sustained, an exalted rank among eminent natural philosophers, notwithstanding numerous attempts were made to deprive him of the merit of his discoveries, prompted by the envy of contemporary philosophers in England and elsewhere, but principally in Great Britain.

An account of his experiments he transmitted to London, in letters to a friend, soon after they were made in 1752. These, when published, excited many others to repeat them, and to admire and extol the inventor. They called forth the honorary degree of Master of Arts from Yale College and Harvard University, in honor of his discoveries.

Having more time at his command than formerly, he paid much attention to experiments in various subjects of natural philosophy; and wrote and published treatises on several branches of science. His time was constantly occupied in something designed to meliorate the condition, and promote the comfort of mankind. But these speculations and philosophical experiments did not interfere with his active duties in society. He continued to be a political favorite with the people of the province.

In 1758, he was appointed by the government to conclude a treaty with the Indians at Carlisle. The next year he was sent to Albany to attend a congress, which the British government had caused to be assembled, for devising a plan of *defence for the colonies against the French and hostile savages*

The deputy post master general, having deceased about this time, Franklin was appointed to that office. The office had been heretofore unproductive ; but under his management, it became a source of considerable revenue to the government.

After the defeat of General Braddock, he took a lively interest in the protection of the colonies against their insidious foes ; and having obtained a law for establishing and disciplining a corps of volunteer militia, he by request of the governor raised a small body of men, and marched with them to the protection of the frontiers, which were much threatened by the French and Indians. But he generally declined military honors ; assigning as his reason for it, his unfitness for military life.

A dispute having arisen in Pennsylvania, between the proprietors of large estates and the provincial assembly, the former claiming to have their private property exempted from taxation, and the latter deeming it unsafe, it was referred to the mother government for a final decision. Franklin was selected as agent to manage the cause on the part of the assembly. He took a decided stand against the unjust pretensions of the executive ; and so conducted the controversy as to obtain a decision in favor of his clients. While he was in England, engaged in this important business, he formed many acquaintances which were highly useful and of much importance to him in the scenes in which he was afterwards called to act so conspicuous a part. He arrived in London on this agency, in July, 1757. While there, the honors of some of the English and Scottish universities were conferred on him.

During his residence in England, he visited the birthplace of his father, in Northamptonshire. He there traced the history of his ancestry ; an account of which he afterwards published, with a favorable exhibition of their character for mechanical ingenuity, integrity, and moral uprightness, for which they were held in good esteem by that community.

He travelled into Scotland also, and there formed many distinguished acquaintances ; among whom was the celebrated author of " Sketches of Criticism," Lord Kaimes. Their friendship, kept alive by a literary correspondence, lasted to the close of life.

After an absence of about five years, he returned to America ; and on his arrival he received the honor of a public vote of thanks from the assembly of Pennsylvania, as a testimony of their approbation, together with the sum of five thou-

sand pounds, as a compensation for his important services rendered to the province. His election to a seat in that body had been continued during his absence, and he consequently took it, and resumed his duties in the legislature without interruption.

During the following year, he was employed in visiting the northern colonies, and regulating the post offices, and in acting on his return, as a commissioner for raising troops for the defence of the frontier against the incursions of the hostile Indians. He was also engaged, some part of the time, in quelling insurrections which occurred in the interior of the province.

In 1764, the proprietors recommenced the controversy which had occasioned Franklin's tour to England in 1757; and their efforts to exclude from the assembly, the man whose influence in that body they most dreaded, having succeeded, he was not a member for this year. But his friends having a majority in the house, came to a resolution to petition the king to abolish the authority of the proprietors. This measure was suggested by Franklin; and it caused his exclusion from the assembly. They having resolved to present their petition to the king in person, again appointed him on the agency, much to the chagrin of the proprietors. On this agency, he embarked for England, in November, 1764, and arrived there the third time the following month. His arrival was cordially greeted by his friends in that country. After spending a year in England, having nothing then to prevent him, he went into Holland, Germany, and France; in all of which countries, his reputation having preceded him, he was received with marked attention, and treated with great respect, and the kindest hospitality, by those in high political station, and the most distinguished philosophers and gentlemen of literary eminence. He was introduced to Louis XV. and the members of his family, and was received, and entertained with marks of particular distinction by the nobility and gentry, who were members of the French court. He was also noticed with particular attention by the various literary bodies in Paris, but especially by the Academy of Sciences, who elected him an honorary member of their body.

Franklin embarked for England the third time, in the year in which the British ministry procured the passage of the celebrated "Stamp act." He exerted himself with the minority, and his personal friends, to prevent its being carried into operation, and to prevent the troubles which he clearly *fore-saw* and predicted would ensue from the course of mea-

tures the government were resolved on, respecting the American colonies. His established character, and the high estimation in which he was held in that country, gave him so much influence, that the opposition party thought it expedient to have him examined at the bar of the house of commons, and publicly interrogated concerning the interests and feelings of the American colonists. They therefore procured a summons for that purpose, on the 3d of February, 1766, which he most cheerfully obeyed. He acquitted himself on the occasion in such a manner, as raised his reputation still higher than it was before, in the estimation of both parties. This examination being afterwards published in England and America, in both countries it was sought after, and read with great solicitude; and in the latter, it not only very much exalted his character, but endeared him to the hearts of his countrymen. While he was in England, he carefully watched the projects of the ministry, respecting the colonies; and foreseeing their consequences, which he deprecated, he exerted his utmost efforts to prevent them; and to his sincere regret, without success. He would gladly have effected a reconciliation at that time, had it been in his power. He foresaw an ultimate separation of the two countries; but, like many others, he thought the time for it had not yet come, and that an attempt to bring it about must be premature.

The time which he spent in England during this visit, (having been appointed agent for several of the colonies,) he devoted to watching the designs and projects of the ministerial party, and in efforts to ward off the approaching evils, which he painfully anticipated. And as he early perceived that it was impracticable to prevent their occurrence, he endeavored to obtain information relative to their purposed measures, which he might improve for the best advantage of his country. In the course of his efforts to accomplish these objects, he met with open and gross insults from the minions of the ministry, which he endured with calm dignity, and great self command. Artful attempts were made to detach him from the interests of his country, and gain him on the side of the ministry; all of which he penetrated and evaded with adroitness and decision. In this manner he spent several years in England, experiencing much which wounded his feelings, effecting none of the objects for which his mission was undertaken, but extending an acquaintance, which he knew would befriend the colonies in the approaching conflict, and acquiring information which he hoped would



be beneficial to them. Being satisfied that his longer stay in England would be productive of no good results, and having learned that he might be marked out for ministerial vengeance, he left that country somewhat precipitately, and arrived at Philadelphia, early in May, 1775. On his arrival, his friends and fellow citizens greeted him with great cordiality, and with marks of sincere respect and gratitude. These he had well merited, by his zeal and fidelity in their cause, and the eminent services he had rendered them.

Immediately on his return, he was elected to a seat in the general congress. He was soon deputed on a mission to Canada, to prevail with that province to make a common cause by joining with the other colonies, in resisting the British aggressions. He was also appointed by congress, to manage the general post office. And he devoted a share of his attention to providing for the defence of Philadelphia against the approach of an enemy by water. It was he who projected the *chevaux de frise* as one means of defence of that city. He also united his zealous endeavors with others, to procure a Declaration of Independence. He was on the committee by whom it was reported; and he signed it upon its adoption by congress.

In May, 1777, Doctor Franklin was appointed by congress, together with John Adams, and Edward Rutledge, to hear the proposals of commissioners sent by the English government, to negotiate with congress a reconciliation. Lord Howe was at the head of that commission. With him Doctor Franklin had formerly become acquainted when he was in England.

After the general congress had advised the several states to form a government for themselves, a convention was called for that purpose. Doctor Franklin was chosen its president.

In 1776, congress appointed him a commissioner to repair to the court of France, to negotiate with that government for aid to the United States, in their conflict with Great Britain. He undertook this embassy in the seventy-first year of his age. He sailed from America the latter part of October, and arrived in Nantz, without any disaster; and after a few days of rest in that city, during which he learned intelligence which augured favorably for his mission, he proceeded to Paris. He reached there in December. Here he met with a very flattering reception from the men in power, and received much to *encourage and strengthen his hopes of accomplishing the*

great object for which he undertook the mission. He had been endeavoring to prepare the way for it some time previous to the appointment, by corresponding with gentlemen in Holland, and elsewhere in Europe. The acquaintances he had formed in his previous missions, with distinguished men in different nations, eminently fitted him, in addition to his other qualifications to undertake this service for his country. Before he left home, he committed his pecuniary funds to congress, which showed his confidence of ultimate success in the struggle, gave a new practical evidence of his patriotism, and set an example which he hoped would be followed by others, who possessed the means of aiding congress to maintain the war.

To avoid the expense of a residence in Paris, after a short time, he took up his abode at Sassay, a neighboring village, where he resided during the whole time he remained in France. Although he was so favorably received in France, and was very much esteemed and respected there although the feelings of both the government, and people of France were hostile to England, and in favor of the Americans, yet the cautious policy of the ministry kept them from openly espousing the American cause, though at the same time they secretly furnished aid to congress; and he could not succeed in the great purpose of his mission, until some signal success of the Americans rendered it probable that the issue of the conflict would be in their favor. This success was obtained in the capture of Burgoyne's army in 1777. That event gave such a favorable aspect to their affairs, that a treaty was negotiated; the American ambassadors were openly recognized; and the French government, in alliance with the United States, openly espoused the cause of American Independence. On this joyful occasion, to show his feelings, he wore the same dress, when rejoicing on account of this success, which to him was a triumph over the British ministry, that he had on at the time he received an insult from them some years before.

The services which now devolved on Doctor Franklin, were complicated, arduous, and often perplexing; but of great importance and much value to the United States; and these he performed with zeal and activity, though at a period when most men would retire from active labors, and enjoy the repose of old age.

To his duties of a minister, he superadded those of a consul; of judge of admiralty, for commissioning privateers, &c.; and of a merchant, for purchasing and superintending the

shipment of property to the United States. To these was added much business of a subordinate character, important to his government, attended with great labor and perplexing anxiety, and for which congress had made no appointment of an agent.

While he was thus engaged in France, congress sent him a commission to negotiate a treaty with the Spanish government. But their slow and temporizing course disgusted Franklin, which he manifested in a letter to Mr. Jay, then in Spain, in the following significant expressions. "They have taken four years to consider whether they would treat with us; give them forty, and let us mind our own business." He carried on his negotiation with that government, through the Spanish minister in France.

The successful result of his negotiation with the French government, placed Doctor Franklin in an attitude which called forth marks of respect from several of the European powers, highly flattering to his feelings; especially as through him, they evinced their own, in relation to the country which he represented, and the cause she was supporting. These were evinced, in various ways, by Sweden, Denmark, and Austria.

After the treaty with France was known in England, it excited no small alarm in that nation; and the ministry especially felt much solicitude about the effect it might have on themselves, and their hold upon the places they held in the government. Besides sending commissioners to America, to treat for peace, which they would gladly have obtained on any terms short of acknowledging the independence of the United States, they despatched emissaries, secret and open, to try their efforts for securing his influence in their favor. He, however, too well understood their characters to be influenced by their flattering attentions; or to listen to any proposals from them, as a basis of an accommodation, short of what had been pledged to the world, in the Declaration of Independence, which received his signature in 1776.

The British made various attempts to detach the Americans from their allies, and to make a separate peace. All of these, whether they were attempted through him, or in the United States, Doctor Franklin opposed with an uniform decision and firmness, highly honorable to his character.

When at length the British, wearied with the procrastinated struggle, and the unsuccessful manner of conducting it, were *willing* to treat for peace on the basis of independence, Doctor

Franklin with his colleagues, had the happiness to sign a definitive treaty of peace with Great Britain, highly honorable and auspicious to the interests, and grateful to the feelings of his countrymen, on the third day of September, 1783.

Having now consummated the great object of his mission, and having attained to a great age, he solicited permission from congress to return to his home and friends. But he was detained there until 1785, when he was succeeded by Mr. Jefferson. While he was in Europe, he negotiated a treaty with Sweden and Prussia.

While he was in France, he caused to be published in the French language, the several constitutions of the individual states, and placed two copies of each in the possession of all the foreign ministers at that court.

After the supposed discovery of animal magnetism by Mesmer had excited much speculation in Europe, and particularly in France, by the express desire of the king of France, Doctor Franklin engaged with a committee to investigate its claims, and united with his colleagues in exposing its imposture.

After a residence in France of fourteen years, he took leave of the king and court, by whom such signal aid had been given to the United States, and from whom he had received marks of respect and distinction, which were conferred on few ministers of the most powerful governments, and prepared for his return to his beloved country; which, on his arrival, he could greet with the deep-felt congratulations upon the restoration of peace, and a successful issue to their long and distressing contest.

He crossed from France over to England; and after spending a few days in the society of some of his old friends, who visited him, he continued his voyage, and reached Philadelphia on the fourteenth day of September.

Although now eighty years of age, he spent this voyage across the Atlantic as he had done those in earlier life, in writing on various subjects, and making philosophical experiments.

His arrival was greeted by all the evidences of pleasure and satisfaction, and the testimonies of respect, esteem, and gratitude, which could be demonstrated by an admiring and grateful people. Congratulatory addresses flowed in from public bodies, and distinguished individuals, continually, expressive of the sense which his country entertained of his character and services.

But his fellow citizens would not suffer him, notwithstanding his great age, to repose in the undisturbed tranquillity of domestic life. He was appointed president of the Pennsylvania convention, in which office he served that state the constitutional term of three years.

In 1787, he was chosen a delegate to the federal convention, which framed the constitution of the United States. He approved of it as it was accepted by the convention, and urgently recommended its adoption by the several states.

After his age and infirmities constrained him wholly to withdraw from public life, he spent all the intervals of ease from those pains which the gout and stone caused him to suffer, in reading, writing, and corresponding with his numerous friends, with the same industry which had characterized his whole life, and the decays of his body appeared greatly in advance of those of his mind. Indeed the latter seem to have been scarcely impaired at all, even after he was wholly confined to his bed. His cheerfulness and philosophical composure remained to the last. But being worn out with his bodily and mental exertions for the good of mankind, he at length breathed his last, and yielded up his long and useful life, on the seventeenth day of April, 1790, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, in the city of Philadelphia.

He was buried with great ceremony, and his funeral was attended by a vast concourse of people, notwithstanding he had in his will enjoined, that his interment should be unattended with pomp and parade. He also forbade, in the same instrument, the erection of all monumental ornaments at his grave. His burial took place on the 21st of April; and an universal mourning for him through the United States, was directed by congress to be continued for thirty days.

The event, on its having been announced in France, was noticed with tokens of grief and public respect, of various kinds, by the municipality of Paris and the national convention. Funeral orations were pronounced under the direction of the former; and it was decreed, that each of the members should wear mourning for three days; and that a letter of condolence should be directed to the American congress, for the irreparable loss they had sustained.

His immediate posterity were two children; a son and a daughter. His son, who had been governor of New Jersey, under the British government, adhering to the royal party, repaired to England, and closed his life there. His daughter married Mr. Bache, of Philadelphia; and her posterity now reside in that city.

## JOHN MORTON.

In the gentleman, whose name stands at the head of this article, we are presented with another instance of a man rising, almost unassisted, from a condition in which he would have continued undistinguished from the thousands who surrounded him, and like them have descended to the grave, unremembered and unknown, but for the resolute and persevering efforts of a determined and vigorous mind.

He was descended from Swedish ancestors, who came to America, and settled in the now state of Delaware, a short distance from Philadelphia. He received the name of his father, who married a Miss Richards, and died before his son, the subject of this sketch, was born. This event occurred in 1724, in the township of Ridley, in the county of Delaware. At a suitable period after his father's decease, his mother was again married to Mr. John Sketchley, an English gentleman, who became fond of his young charge, and treated his little step-son with the kind endearment and affectionate care, which would have become his own father. He was a gentleman of education, was much employed as a surveyor, and was well qualified and happily disposed to become the affectionate tutor of his ward, which he did with fidelity, and no ordinary success. He taught him in several branches of mathematics, and especially in the art of surveying, and rendered him skilful in the business which he pursued. His mind by nature was strong; and the benefits he derived from his step-father's paternal instructions, he subsequently improved with a success at once honorable and exemplary. Afterwards he realized the fruits of his faithful and industrious labor, in a rich harvest of honors which were awarded to him by his fellow citizens.

His early employment was surveying new lands, and cultivating his patrimonial farm. In these he continued until he was called into public service, by the suffrages of his neighbors.

In 1764, when he was about forty years of age, he was commissioned as a justice of the peace, under the provincial government of Pennsylvania. Soon afterwards, he was chosen a representative to the general assembly of that province; and was, for a succession of years, speaker of the house.

After he was introduced to public employment, he seems to have rapidly risen in the esteem and confidence of his fellow men. By their concurrence he was sent a delegate to the congress of 1765, which met at New York, in conformity to the circular addressed to the legislative assemblies of the several colonies, by the house of representatives of Massachusetts, in consequence of the passing of the "Stamp act."

There happening a vacancy in the office of high sheriff of the county where Mr. Morton resided, by the death of the incumbent, in 1766, he was appointed to fill the office, by the governor; and this appointment was confirmed by the general assembly, at the next general election, by such a majority, as proved his extensive popularity, and the confidence which the public reposed in him. That office he held three years, to the entire satisfaction of the public.

After American blood had been shed by the king's troops, at Lexington, in Massachusetts, the military spirit was kindled through the colonies. In Pennsylvania, in his immediate vicinity, it was manifested by the organization of a volunteer battalion, which elected him for their colonel and commander. He however declined accepting the office, on account of other public engagements, which he deemed to be incompatible with military services. He had held the office of presiding judge of the provincial court of quarter sessions and common pleas; the duties of which he discharged with so much intelligence and fidelity, that about the time of the military honor proffered him, he was appointed one of the judges of the supreme court of the province.

When it had been resolved to convene a general congress, from the several colonies, in Philadelphia, to consider of the alarming prospects of the country, the assembly of Pennsylvania appointed Mr. Morton a delegate to that body, on the 22d day of July, 1774. He was re-elected to congress in December of the same year. In November, 1775, while he was officiating as speaker of the assembly, he was again chosen to represent the province in congress; and in July, 1776, he was once more, and for the last time, honored by an appointment to the same important office. Although his last election was, by some days, subsequent to the day on which the great question of the independence of the United States was determined, his previous election had retained him in his seat on that memorable day; and he was then called on officially, to decide the question whether there should be an unanimous vote of the colonies, or whether Pennsylvania

would cling to her opposition to the measure, and remain an exception to the otherwise unanimous decision. The opinions and determination of his colleagues then present, were well known, and they being equally divided, it devolved on him to decide the question by his single vote. The responsibility of his situation was solemn and momentous. But he met the trying occasion with the firmness it demanded, and gave his vote in favor of independence. Thus the thirteen British American Colonies renounced their allegiance to Great Britain, and immediately assumed the title of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA. His re-election on the twentieth of the same month on which, by his single vote, he had bound Pennsylvania to the Union, must have been highly gratifying to his feelings.

The services which Mr. Morton rendered, during the time he was a member of congress, were numerous and important. Like the other members, he was much employed on committees, and he was chairman of that distinguished one which formed, and ultimately reported the system of confederation, which was agreed to in 1777.

When he found himself called on to decide the great question just noticed, it is confidently affirmed, and fully believed, that the deep sense of the awful responsibility which then lay on him, produced such an effect on his health, as hastened, if it did not cause, his death. This event to human view, was premature, it having occurred in April, 1777, when he had not attained the full age of fifty-four years.

He was married to Miss Anne Justus of Delaware, and their offspring were numerous. Eight survived their father, three sons, and five daughters.

Mr. Morton was a member of St. James's church, in the town of Chester; in the cemetery of which his remains were interred.

The rank and honors to which he rose, from the humble condition of his early life, with the aid of no very extraordinary advantages, evince a strong energetic mind, and talents of a high order; and he discharged all the duties of public and domestic life in such a consistent manner, as became such a man, professing the religion of the gospel, and acting in conformity with its principles and requirements.



## GEORGE CLYMER.

The father of George Clymer emigrated from Bristol, in England, and settled at Philadelphia. He was connected with a very respectable family in the former city, where he was born and educated. In Philadelphia he married, lived but a few years, and died. At the time of his parent's decease, George was but seven years old, and left in a state of orphanage. But in his uncle, William Coleman Esquire, a highly respectable citizen of Philadelphia, this orphan child had providentially provided for him the kindness of a father, the wisdom and caution of a judicious guardian, and the precepts and example of a well informed and upright man.

This worthy man, having such a charge placed in his hands cheerfully assumed the responsibility; and he early provided his young ward with such means of education, as he deemed his destined business as a commercial man required, to qualify him to fulfil the duties of a merchant with faithfulness, respectability, and (so far as it rested on qualifications to ensure it) success. Mr. Coleman undertook the superintendence of his nephew's education. He treated him as a son, and a member of his family, till he married.

Having finished his education preparatory to entering on his business, his uncle placed him in his counting-house, that he might become qualified for mercantile pursuits. The business was not congenial to his feelings, although he attended with fidelity to the duties of his station. His principles were opposed to the trafficking of a merchant, because he believed the vicissitudes of sudden losses and gains were connected with temptations dangerous to moral principle, exposing young men to make shipwreck of character, either by great and sudden prosperity, or deep adversity. In his adherence to these views, he was uniform; and although he entered into mercantile business himself, in connection with a Mr. Robert Ritchie, and afterwards with his father-in-law and brother-in-law, Mr. Meredith & Son, he, nevertheless, successfully dissuaded his children from engaging in it, as a business which he did not approve.

He inherited the principal part of his uncle's fortune. When about twenty-seven years of age, he married Miss Elizabeth Meredith, with whose father and brother he *continued the mercantile business until the decease of the for-*

mer, and afterwards with the son, until about 1782. Notwithstanding his engagements in business, by which much of his time was necessarily occupied, he was assiduous in cultivating and improving his mind by reading, for which he had a strong relish from his childhood. Happily for him, his uncle's library, which was large and judiciously selected, furnished him ample means for gratifying his disposition, even from his youth.

Mr. Clymer manifested republican principles at an early age; and even anticipated many who were decided in support of the colonial rights against British usurpation. He attended all the public and private meetings which were called in Philadelphia, to consider of the political state of Americans, and to devise proper measures to be pursued in the approaching emergency. In those meetings, and at all other suitable seasons, he uniformly evinced such an ardent zeal and firm resolution, in support of the cause he maintained, and such an enlightened understanding of the grounds that sustained it, that his fellow citizens early looked upon him as one who would take the place of a leader among them, in defence of their common rights and dearest interests. So soon as it was ascertained that a resort to arms would become necessary for maintaining the just rights of the colonies, and that all conciliatory means had been rejected by parliament, Mr. Clymer accepted the command of a volunteer company, and retained it, with much satisfaction to General Cadwallader, to whose brigade he was attached, until his civil engagements rendered it improper for him to hold it longer. When he resigned his military commission, his commanding general expressed much regret at his retirement from military life.

When the British parliament passed the "Tea act," as it was called, which excited such an opposition on the part of the people in Boston, as resulted in throwing some cargoes into the dock; the same spirit was felt throughout the commercial colonies; and in Philadelphia strenuous efforts were made for resisting the operation of that law. Mr. Clymer took a leading part in the opposition of his fellow citizens; and was personally very much engaged in rousing up the spirit of patriotism, in devising systematic measures, and in rendering the measures effectual in practice. He was placed at the head of a large and responsible committee of vigilance, one of whose duties it was to detect attempts to evade their regulations, and punish the transgressors. Another was, to persuade those who had been appointed agents

to sell such cargoes of tea as might be sent out by the East India company, to resign their agency.

So soon as it was deemed expedient to appoint a council of safety, he was selected for a member of that board. Shortly after congress appointed him, in conjunction with Michael Hillegas, one of the first continental treasurers. The duties of that office he discharged with fidelity, till about the time of his election to congress. When this event took place, Mr. Clymer resolved to devote himself exclusively to civil life, in promoting those important interests of his country, which would naturally come before him as a member of the continental congress.

At a very early period of the controversy with England, he entered into the interests of the colonies with the strongest solicitude to promote their prosperity by all the means he possessed. With this view he took much pains to procure a loan for the continental service by subscription; and was one of the first subscribers to it; and he exerted himself to induce others to follow his example.

At this time, (the early part of 1776,) the representatives in congress from Pennsylvania, were unfavorable to a separation of the colonies from Great Britain; and when the question came to a decision, they refused to concur, and withdrew from their seats in congress. On the twentieth of July of that year, George Clymer, Doctor Benjamin Rush, James Wilson, George Ross, and George Taylor, Esquires, were appointed to succeed their hesitating predecessors, and to take their seats in congress. Although he was not a member when the great measure was decided, and could not therefore sign it at the time, he affixed his signature to it, as soon as his official station admitted of his doing it authoritatively; and thus consummated one of the most ardent desires of his heart. He had looked forward to the adoption of that great measure as the beginning of a system of proceedings on the part of the American colonies, which was to lay a broad foundation for the future prosperity of his country, and was fully persuaded that nothing of much importance could be accomplished until that had taken place.

Mr. Clymer was appointed by congress, in September 1776, one of a confidential committee mentioned in this volume, to repair to Ticonderoga, to inspect the condition of the northern army. He was also designated a member of a most important committee which congress deemed it necessary to have continued in Philadelphia, after they had re-

tired from that city, by reason of the approach of the enemy's forces to take possession of it. The performance of the duties which this appointment had devolved on him, required great self-denial, fidelity, and caution. The performance was rendered in a manner answerable to the confidence reposed in him by congress, and corresponding to his long established reputation.

On the twelfth day of March, 1777, he was again elected a member of congress, and continued to be active only until the nineteenth of May following, at which time he obtained leave of absence for the purpose of recruiting his health, which had become impaired by reason of his arduous and unremitting attention to his public duties. He was, while present in congress, continually employed on committees of great importance, for maturing business of many kinds for the final decision of that body. Indeed, indolence and inaction were not admissible.

Again in 1777, Mr. Clymer was deputed on a committee to repair to the head quarters of General Washington, to institute an inquiry into the state of the army, and to investigate the causes of complaint of the commissary's department. Many abuses are said to have been practised in that important branch of the public service, by reason of which the military operations of the army were impeded and deranged. This committee, consisting of Mr. Clymer, Mr. Philip Livingston and Mr. Gerry, was to search them out, and apply the best remedy of which the case admitted.

At the time of General Washington's defeat at the Brandywine, when the British army was marching towards Philadelphia, Mr. Clymer's family, having previously left their residence, had retired to Chester county for safety. This movement, calculated for their security, eventually placed them in the danger they intended to avoid. By domestic traitors, heir place of retreat was pointed out to a band of the enemy, who went to the place, sacked his house, destroyed his furniture, drank as much of his stock of liquors as they could, and then stove the residue of such as they were unable to carry away with them.

Mr. Clymer appears to have been peculiarly obnoxious to the British. Doubtless this was in consequence of his firm uniform, and active resistance to all their endeavors to ensure success to the royal cause. He did not suffer his personal losses by their means, nor the absence of his family, aggra-

vated as it was by sickness, to call him from a faithful attendance on the important trusts committed to him by congress. After the British had taken possession of Philadelphia, they commenced giving vent to their resentment, by gathering, as they supposed, around his house to demolish it. Fortunately they mistook the house of one of his relatives for his; and on being assured of their mistake, their resentment so far abated, that they spared the building, and left the habitation unmolested.

In 1777, the Indians bordering upon the western frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania, instigated by British agents, sent as emissaries among them for the purpose, committed many acts of savage barbarity among the scattered and defenceless inhabitants in that region. Some of the white settlers were, by the same influence, induced to aid them in their atrocities. These things were viewed as hazarding the friendship of the Shawanese and Delaware Indians, who had continued amicably inclined towards the Americans. They had entered into a league of friendship with congress; and for that reason they were threatened with hostilities, by their neighbors.

To prevent by anticipation further evils from that source, congress appointed a commission, consisting of three, to repair to Fort Pitt, to investigate the subject. Mr. Clymer was one of the commissioners; and he, alone of the three, went to the scene of these troubles. Their instructions were to investigate the origin, progress, and extent of the disaffection, and to take such measures as they might deem requisite, to prevent its further progress, and to restore tranquillity among the disaffected, by bringing them to a just sense of their duty. Their powers, comprised in their instructions for accomplishing this purpose, were ample, in a great degree discretionary, and of a very delicate nature to be exercised on such a theatre.

Whatever causes may have prevented his colleagues from attending to this important call of their country, Mr. Clymer entered on the arduous and hazardous service singly, early in the year 1778. He went to Pittsburgh, and by reason of the failure of his colleagues in attending, he found himself much embarrassed and obstructed in prosecuting the objects of his mission to a favorable result.

It was, however, productive of considerable advantage to the Americans; and, although in some respects, its results

were not as beneficial as had been anticipated, it was not owing to any want of fidelity in him, after his arrival at the place appointed.

During his absence on that business, Mr. Clymer narrowly escaped destruction by an Indian's tomahawk. His preservation was, as afterwards appeared evident, in consequence of his choosing one of two roads, which led with about equal facility to the place of his destination. By taking the one he pursued, unapprised of special danger in either, he reached his friend's house in safety; and on the same day, a white man was murdered by a savage, on the road which Mr. Clymer had not travelled. Whenever his patriotism was put in special requisition by the call of his country, the demand was met with great promptitude. This was often verified; and particularly, at a time when the treasury was drained, and the means for replenishing it were not at ready command, and the army was in danger of disbanding, by reason of their intense sufferings from cold and hunger. To relieve this distressing condition of the government, a number of the citizens of Philadelphia stepped forward, and instituted a special bank, which sustained the public credit in that emergency. By that means, the disastrous event which was feared was obviated. Of this plan, from which no sinister advantage was contemplated by the stockholders, Mr. Clymer was one of the first projectors, and not only subscribed to it himself, but used his utmost exertions to induce others to subscribe also. The bank was organized; proffered as an aid to congress; and accepted by that body, with a vote of thanks to its projectors, and an assurance of full indemnity to the public spirited stockholders. When it went into operation, Mr. Clymer was selected as one of its managing directors, and remained such until its concerns were closed.

In the autumn of the year 1780, Mr. Clymer was notified of his election to congress a third time, and immediately took his seat, and resumed his active labors in the national council. So faithfully did he devote himself to the public service, during the interval between November, 1780, and the same month in 1782, that he was absent from his place but a few weeks in the lapse of about two years, and some of those were employed in services assigned him by congress. So paramount in his estimation were the concerns of the public, entrusted to him, to those of his individual interest, that the latter received but a small share of his attention for several years.

He evinced the same zeal and patronage in favor of the national bank, when the plan of that institution was proposed to congress by Robert Morris, Esq., that he had formerly, in favor of the special bank just mentioned.

In 1782, the several states having been very slow in supplying their several quotas for the public service, congress considered it necessary to adopt some measures more efficient for that purpose than such as had been hitherto pursued. In pursuance of that object in relation to the southern states, congress appointed Mr. Clymer, and Mr. Edward Rutledge, commissioners to repair thither, and make such representations to their several executives, as were calculated to promote an object so vitally important to the public service.

After having executed the duties of that mission, having also vacated his seat in congress, he removed his family to Princeton in New Jersey, with a view to educating his family. That justly celebrated seminary furnished many advantages favorable for his purpose, such as could not be found in his native state. He thought he saw the revolutionary contest drawing near to its close; and in that event being realized, he was convinced he might be suffered to withdraw from public service, without any sacrifice of duty; and in the enjoyment of domestic quietude, attend to the interests and concerns of his own family. But after a short residence there, an intimation that his services were needed in Pennsylvania, induced him to return to the theatre of public life, and relinquish his peaceful retreat at Princeton. He was elected to the legislature of Pennsylvania, at a time when a malignant spirit of party was running very high in that state, and he was selected, in connection with Robert Morris and Thomas Fitzsimmons, Esquires, to co-operate with them in obviating its baneful effects, and anticipated consequences.

It was during his continuance as a member of the state legislature, that the penitentiary system for punishing malefactors, was substituted for the more summary, and in many instances sanguinary penalties, which the existing code of laws required. For its establishment in that state, he was a zealous and a uniform advocate. If he did not originate the plan, he was one of its earliest friends, and he continued to urge its adoption, until success crowned his efforts. He was undoubtedly a principal agent in meliorating the criminal law and its penalties, which were applied in numerous instances, in conformity to it, in his native state; and for which he *merited* the title of a public benefactor.

When it was determined to call a convention from the several states, to frame a constitution for a general government of the United States in place of the old confederation, Mr. Clymer received a new evidence of public confidence. While he was yet an acting member of the legislature of Pennsylvania, that body appointed him one of their delegates to the convention, which was soon after to meet in Philadelphia. The constitution having been formed, and adopted by the requisite number of states to commence its operation, Mr. Clymer was chosen a member of the first congress which convened under its authority. In this, as in every preceding instance, his course was marked by that same industry, intelligence, integrity, and patriotism which had uniformly regulated and marked his whole public life.

He was in favor of the naturalization of foreigners who sought a residence here; but he was justly in favor of subjecting emigrants to a longer term of probation, before they became entitled to the elective privileges of native citizens, than was adopted under a subsequent administration.

After the first congress closed its term of two years, Mr. Clymer declined a re-election. This terminated his legislative career. But President Washington appointed him supervisor of the revenue for the state of Pennsylvania. The office in that state was attended with many difficulties, by reason of the opposition which had been excited to its exactions (and the law by which they were required) in the western counties. From these, however, he did not shrink, notwithstanding, in performing the requisite duties, he was exposed to personal dangers, and even his life was at times in jeopardy. The faithful performance of his official duties, however, he found so difficult, and attended with so much odium, that he was induced to resign it. This step he expected would finish the career of his public duties; but it proved otherwise.

In the year 1796, he was appointed, with Colonels Hawkins and Pickens, to negotiate a treaty with the Cherokee and Creek Indians in Georgia. Mr. Clymer with his attendants took passage by water to Georgia, and by doing so was much in danger of being shipwrecked; they having been overtaken by a storm, in a vessel unsea-worthy. But being able, after much toiling at the pumps, to make a harbor at Charleston, in South Carolina, the scene was agreeably changed, and their sufferings compensated by the hospitality they received from the citizens of Charleston.

After some delay the commissioners arrived at the scene



of their labors, and negotiated a treaty, to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. Having accomplished the objects of their mission to Georgia, Mr. and Mrs. Clymer embarked at St. Mary's, on the twentieth day of July, to return to their own home in Pennsylvania. This service closed the political life of Mr. Clymer; the aggregate of which was more than twenty years.

During the continuance of his after life, Mr. Clymer was engaged in promoting several different objects of public utility. Among these it will be proper to mention the Academy of Arts and Sciences, which still exists in Philadelphia. He was an early and zealous patron of that institution; and after its establishment he was placed at its head. That office he held till his decease. He was an active promoter of the Philadelphia Agricultural Society, and was chosen vice president of that institution; in which office he continued until the close of his useful life. The business of agriculture, as a science, engaged much of his attention; and in its favor he uniformly showed much interest; and in truth, few things seem to have escaped his notice, which presented a prospect of advancing the prosperity and happiness of his country.

Having filled up many years with numerous acts of public and private usefulness, this worthy patriot and estimable philanthropist closed a long and laborious life, on the twenty-third day of January, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. During that long period of intercourse with his fellow men, both in public and private life, his moral character was considered irreproachable.



### JAMES SMITH.

THIS gentleman was a native of Ireland, and came to America, when he was quite a lad, and one of a numerous family of children, for whom his father, a respectable farmer, sought a settlement in this new world. As no record of his birth has been preserved, and since he preserved its date an inviolable secret, which he carried with him to his grave, there are no means of ascertaining precisely his age. The most that is clearly known respecting it

is; that he was born early in the eighteenth century, probably between 1712 and 1720.

The residence which the father selected for the settlement of his family, was on the west side of the Susquehannah River. He there lived to see his children comfortably provided for, and died in 1761, leaving behind him a respectable character, for honesty and benevolence.

James, the subject of this memoir, was the second son, and his father concluded to give him an opportunity for acquiring an education superior to what was common at that time in the colonies. For this purpose he placed him under the immediate charge of the Reverend Doctor Allison, provost of the college at Philadelphia—a gentleman to whom several of his colleagues, signers of the Declaration of Independence, and other distinguished men of that age, were under obligations for useful instruction in their collegiate life. Under his tuition, James Smith acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages. But what was most useful and profitable to himself, and rendered him much respected in the thinly populated part of the colony where he resided, was the art of surveying, which he learned under Doctor Allison's instruction. With such preparatory qualifications he commenced the study of law in Lancaster, where his elder brother was already established in the practice of that profession. Having passed through his preparatory term he removed to a considerable distance westward, where there were but few inhabitants, and there pursued the business of a practitioner of law, and that of a surveyor of lands. The place where he located himself, although long since a thickly settled and flourishing part of Pennsylvania was then almost an entire wilderness. It was in the vicinity of what is now Shippensburg.

The numerous speculations in land, and the uncertain condition of the relative boundaries, always fruitful source of litigation, had already produced their usual effects in that remote region, and furnished Mr. Smith with a full supply of professional employment; and it continued to be a productive source of business and gain during the long term which, with occasional interruptions, he pursued it. This extended to nearly sixty years.

But ample success in procuring professional employment, and the prospect of accumulating a fortune, did not compensate him for the privations he was destined to experience in that wilderness; and after a short continuance there, he re-

moved to York, a flourishing village, where he might in connection with his professional business, be favored with the pleasures of intelligent society, to which he felt a strong attachment.

Another inducement urged him to this change of residence. There was not at that time, any lawyer in York; and after his removal he continued to occupy the station alone, without any competitor, for many years.

Soon after his settlement in York, he was united by marriage to Miss Eleanor Amor, of Newcastle, in Delaware; a lady with whom he lived many years in the enjoyment of great domestic felicity. Mr. Smith was at the head of the bar in that county, from his first settling in York until the commencement of the American revolution.

He was a person of many eccentricities of character; and possessed a vein of wit and humor, which rendered him a favorite companion in every social circle. He had read much, possessed a retentive memory, and had collected from reading and observation a large fund of anecdotes, which he would relate, and apply in a manner to excite much amusement on every occasion. But notwithstanding this natural proneness to hilarity, on every thing connected with the Christian religion, and its ministers, he was grave and sedate; and never did himself, nor suffered others in his presence to sneer at or jest with those objects which he held to be sacred.

Mr. Smith spent his time happily from his establishment in York, until the prospect of the country's rights and tranquillity became overcast; and the apprehensions of all intelligent men began to look for an approaching crisis, in which the liberties of the American provinces would be involved in great difficulty and hazard. On the aspect of the times Mr. Smith, like other leading and cautious patriots in that and other provinces, had early fixed his attention; and, like them also, he soon determined, whatever might ensue, upon resisting illegal and unconstitutional encroachments by the British government, on the rights of the colonists. Thus, when the question of resistance or submission came to be a subject of general discussion, he was advanced beyond many others in his views of what would be requisite to meet the crisis, and in his readiness to adopt all such measures, as the just rights of the colonies demanded for their protection. In this respect he stood on a footing with Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, and Patrick Henry, of Virginia, J. and S

Adams, and John Hancock, of Massachusetts, and other patriots in different parts of the country.

Hence Mr. Smith was already prepared, when the two leading measures which were proposed by some persons in Boston, for a non-importation agreement, as respected Great Britain and her dependencies, and the meeting of a general congress of delegates from all the American colonies, to consult for the general safety, to adopt them without any hesitation, and considered them as indispensable. So soon as this proposal from Massachusetts reached Pennsylvania, it found in him an active and zealous advocate.

A meeting having been called of delegates from the several counties in Pennsylvania to collect and ascertain the sentiments of the people of that province, on these propositions, and on the condition of public affairs generally, Mr. Smith appeared, and took his seat as one of three delegates from the county of York, in which he resided. This body of delegates received the appellation of "The Committee of the Province of Pennsylvania," and it was composed of men of high standing in the province for intelligence, undoubted integrity, and patriotism. After they had ascertained and collected the general sentiments of the people, through their representatives, their most important duty was to express them in the form of instructions. A select committee was appointed by the meeting to prepare this important document, of which Mr. Smith was a member.

The report which that committee rendered to the body by which it was appointed, and which was adopted by that assembly of delegates, was pacific and respectful, yet firm, in relation to ultimately uniting in all such measures as congress might deem it necessary to adopt, for the security of their colonial rights, provided redress and security could not be obtained against parliamentary usurpation by less hostile measures. How Mr. Smith voted in the committee regarding this report, is not known with certainty. But his conduct, and the measures he adopted, immediately on his return home, furnish no small ground for believing that he was disposed, even then to dissolve all colonial connection with the parent state, and bid her defiance at once. For soon after he returned to York, he commenced raising and drilling a company of volunteers, of which he took the command, as their captain. This being the first volunteer corps raised in Pennsylvania for opposing the British, and undertaken by Mr. Smith, on his own responsibility, was the commencement

of a system which, in a short time began to be enlarged, and was extensively imitated in that province with success; and also with much benefit to the general cause for which they had associated. When the volunteer companies in that vicinity had become sufficiently numerous to form a regiment, he was chosen its colonel. Hence he derived the title which he held merely as honorary. His age forbidding his assuming the actual command; he received the appointment as it was designed, as an honorable mark of respect for his character and patriotic exertions, and left the active duty of commanding to his juniors in years, and in office.

“The convention for the province of Pennsylvania” met the first time in January, 1775. This kind of assembly, in the several colonies, was a distinct body from the authorized legislative assemblies convened under the superintendence of the royal governors; and not long after their organization, they generally superseded them, and became the acknowledged legislative assemblies of the several provinces; and those alone whose authority the people would acknowledge as legitimate. Of that convention Mr. Smith was returned a member for York; and was among the most prompt, and foremost for adopting strong resolutions, and decided measures, for defending the constitutional rights and liberty of the American colonies, against their invaders.

The province of Pennsylvania, owing to a peculiarity in the character, and religious sentiments of a large portion of her population, and some other causes, was backward in assuming that attitude of determined resistance which the safety of the country demanded. The Quakers were almost unanimous in their opposition to the congress, and to all the measures which were recommended by that body, for resisting the claims of the English government. They had great influence with a numerous class of the people; and by publishing their “annual testimony,” they embarrassed the measures of congress. This state of the province influenced many of their leading and patriotic men, to advance cautiously and slowly towards the time of division, which was then drawing near, between Great Britain and the colonies. But the colonies were in a condition which rendered it impracticable to retreat, without surrendering at discretion, and accepting life on such conditions as an incensed enemy might impose. The other alternative, and the only one, was to advance and conquer, or perish in the conflict. A few men, comparatively in *that province*, were prepared for the latter. Among these,

one of the earliest, most resolute, and determined, we have already seen, was James Smith.

But the time rapidly approached when this timid and cautious policy, by which the general assembly was nearly spell-bound, had to give place to another system; and those feelings of languor in which so many had hitherto indulged, were to yield to those of a more energetic tone, and a corresponding activity of conduct. Pennsylvania must decide the question, whether she would unite with the other provinces in throwing off her allegiance, and make common cause with them, or abide by her allegiance, and accept the terms which might be given to her. A Declaration of Independence of the American colonies, was at length found to be indispensable by the general assembly of that colony; and it was somewhat difficult to select men for delegates in congress, who were prepared to meet the occasion, and unite with those from other provinces in pledging Pennsylvania to sanction and support the bold and hazardous measure. Such men however did exist; they were selected by the general assembly, and appointed to occupy the seats of some who had vacated their places, either because they disapproved of the measure, or because they shrunk from the fearful responsibility. Among this number was James Smith of York. In all the efforts which were made by the leading patriots of Pennsylvania, to awaken the people, and the legislative assembly of that province, to a realizing apprehension of their true condition, of their perils, and of the indispensable necessity for meeting the crisis which had arrived, with a determined resolution and vigorous effort, Mr. Smith was one of the boldest, most active, persevering, and influential. He pursued the object, uniting his exertions with those of his friends of a congenial temper, with an untiring activity, and a decision of character, that did him great honor.

After congress had passed a resolve, the conclusion of which recommended to the several colonies to "adopt such governments as in the opinion of the representatives of the people, might best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and America in general;" the instructions of the general assembly last given to their delegates, being strongly in opposition to declaring the colonies independent; the spirit of the people was roused, and they appointed a convention of delegates from the several counties to meet in Philadelphia, to consult on their condition, and to make known their sentiments to the general assembly. This

conference was held at the time appointed; it consisted of ninety-six delegates, selected from the most decided whigs in the colony. A select committee of three members was appointed to draw up a statement of their sentiments, and report it to the meeting the next day. The committee consisted of three members, viz. Thomas M'Kean, James Smith, and Benjamin Rush. The report was ably drawn, considering the short time allowed the committee; it was firm and spirited; it embraced the leading principles and sentiments afterwards expressed in the Declaration of Independence. In that paper may be seen, as if reflected by a mirror, the patriotic character of Colonel Smith, as well as his colleagues.

It was this declaration of the sentiments of the people, through their representatives, that produced the desired effect upon the general assembly, and left their delegates to act their own pleasure. In bringing about this revolution in the sentiments of the people, Colonel Smith was one of the most active and influential persons in the province. He early saw that the struggle would ultimately come to the point; and he made every exertion in his power, to prepare the community for the event.

He was chiefly instrumental in exciting the military spirit which existed in Pennsylvania, and which became highly important during the contest. He commenced it, as has been stated, by raising a volunteer corps in York; and it extended through the colony, until it embraced, according to the testimony of Mr. Penn before the British house of lords, a body of "Associators," amounting to twenty thousand men, who had volunteered their services to the state. This had all been effected previously to the resolution in congress, introduced by Mr. Lee of Virginia for a Declaration of Independence.

After congress had passed the resolution, declaring the American colonies free and independent states, it became necessary for each of the states to adopt a government suited to its new condition. For this purpose a convention of delegates was called, to form a constitution for Pennsylvania, which assembled on the fifteenth day of July, 1776, in Philadelphia. Colonel Smith was a member of that convention. By that body he was appointed a member of a committee "to make an essay for a declaration of rights for that state." But before that committee had had time to make their report, the convention, which had superseded the general assembly, appointed nine members of congress, of which

Colonel Smith was one. This was on the twentieth day of July, eighteen days after the declaration was passed in congress; and yet previous to the time appointed for the several members to affix their signatures to the parchment, on which the declaration was engrossed.

His appointment to a place in congress, did not induce him immediately to vacate his seat in the convention. He continued an active and important member of that assembly; and was appointed a member of several select committees, to whose charge was referred some of the most interesting subjects they had to determine. After the convention had finished the business of its appointment, Colonel Smith took his seat in congress. But it was not until the beginning of October of that year, that he commenced his regular attendance in that national council. Nor had he been long a member before he was called, together with Mr. Wilson, Mr. Chase, Mr. Clymer, and Mr. Stockton, to the exercise of a most important trust. They constituted an executive committee, whose duties are expressed in these terms, "To devise and execute measures for effectually reinforcing General Washington, and obstructing the progress of General Howe's army." This, at that juncture, comprised but little, if any thing, short of directing the whole business of superintending and carrying on the war.

From the time of his entering congress until March, 1777, Colonel Smith was continually employed in the house, or engaged in the business of the committee last mentioned.

The interest he had long felt in the public concerns had called him so much abroad, that his private interests had suffered considerable detriment in consequence of his absence. He therefore determined to decline a re-election in the spring of 1777, that he might have an opportunity to attend to his own affairs. He returned to his family, and engaged again in his professional employments, and pursued them with great assiduity.

His retirement, however, was of short continuance. For such was the situation of the country, and indeed of congress, after the British took possession of Philadelphia, and the battles of Germantown and Brandywine, that he was again urged to consent to resume his seat in congress; and in December of that year he consented to engage again in the public service, as a member of congress. His attendance was now much less inconvenient than before. It at first removed to Lancaster, a place much nearer to his residence



than Philadelphia, and then to York, the place of his home, which last removal rendered it peculiarly gratifying to Colonel Smith.

After the confederation had been adopted by congress, the treaty of alliance with France concluded, the French fleet had arrived on our coast, the British had been compelled to leave New Jersey, and had been defeated at Monmouth—the face of things brightened; and Colonel Smith indulging the hope that a happy termination of the war was at hand, concluded to retire, and yield his place to a successor. Accordingly in November, 1778, he withdrew finally from congress, and returned to his family and professional business. But in 1779 he was once more called from his domestic and professional duties, to take a seat in the legislature of Pennsylvania. This he held, however, but one session, and then withdrew from all public business, and applied himself exclusively to his private concerns.

He died on the eleventh day of July, 1806.

But two of his five children survived him; a son and a daughter. The former died a few years after him; and the only surviving daughter is the wife of Mr. James Johnston, of York, the place of his own residence



### GEORGE TAYLOR.

GEORGE TAYLOR was an Irish redemptioner; not, however, of that low class which the term usually indicates. He is said to have been the son of a clergyman in Ireland, and born in the year 1716. But of what religious denomination his father was a member, or where established in his ministerial vocation, we have not been able to ascertain. He seems, to have been a man of wisdom and sound judgment, so far as we are able to form an opinion, from the course he took with his son. Being conscious that he must depend on himself in gaining a living, since he had no fortune to bestow on him, nor to leave him at his death, he adopted the wisest course he could pursue for his future prosperity, and gave him an education somewhat superior to what was usual in that country at that period to be given to those who had to make their way through the world by their own *exertion, and enterprise.*

It was the wish and purpose of his father, that he should be qualified for practising one of the professions. Consulting his talents and the bent of his disposition, as he supposed, his father selected the medical profession, as being better suited to his genius, and that in which it was believed success was apparently the most promising. It is probable, although not certain, that George actually entered on the study of medicine. But if so, the object does not seem to have been sufficiently attractive to his roving and adventurous spirit, to induce him to persevere in its pursuit; and he soon came to a determination to quit it, and engage in some other, in which the prospect of success was more inviting. Whether he had America, or any other country, particularly in view, as the field of his adventures, is not known. It is not improbable, however, that he had not, and that his coming to America was the result of what is usually termed accident. Being resolved to leave his native shore for *some* distant region, and without feeling very solicitous about any particular country to which he should direct his course, hearing of a vessel about to sail for New York or Philadelphia, penniless and friendless, he stepped on board, and embarked as a redemptor.

On his arrival in Philadelphia, he providentially met with a Mr. Savage, who wanted his services, and who, on condition of his engaging to labor for him for a term of years, paid the expenses Taylor had incurred in coming to America; and he immediately accompanied Mr. Savage to Durham, a village situated on the Delaware River, a few miles below Easton. In Durham, Mr. Savage was improving an extensive establishment of iron works, in which he gave employment to a number of laborers. "George" was put to the business of what, in the appropriate language of such an establishment, is called "*filling*," that is, supplying the furnace with coal when in the operation of blasting. But the blisters soon raised on his hands proved, that it was an employment to which he was unused. The fact was noticed by the workmen, and by them mentioned to Mr. Savage. He soon perceived by the delicate appearance of George's hands, and some other indications he had observed, that his education had been superior to that of the common Irish laborers. He had discovered remarkable intelligence in the lad; and believing that he was qualified for an employment of a different character from that in which he had placed him, with feelings of compassion for him, he asked George if he could

not handle a pen better than a shovel? Young Taylor, with great pleasure, changed his employment of "filler" for that of a clerk, and conducted with so much intelligence and fidelity, that in a short time he rendered himself a very important and useful member of the establishment. He gained the esteem and confidence of Mr. Savage and his family, in the situation in which he was placed. That situation he retained during several years; and after the death of Mr. Savage, which occurred at no very distant period, suitable time having elapsed, he married his widow, and thus came into possession of his business. This he continued to prosecute for a number of years; and conducted it with such industry, prudence, and skill, that he acquired a competent fortune. What particularly induced him to quit his station in Durham, and change his abode, is not known. But he purchased a considerable estate on the Lehigh, in the county of Northampton; and there he commenced business anew. He erected a large stone dwelling house, and some iron works, in which he became associated with others who were engaged in prosecuting the same business. He took up his residence in this new habitation, and continued to occupy it for several years. But before he had been long an inhabitant in that county, he had become so conspicuous a character, and gained the esteem and confidence of the inhabitants of Northampton so far, that they elected him one of their representatives to the colonial assembly. Thus he was ushered into public life, and entered on that theatre on which he was destined to act a conspicuous part in the great drama of the American revolution, and to occupy a station on the page of history that will reach the end of time. This enrolled his name among those chivalrous patriots, who, at the risk of "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors," dared to wrest an empire from the grasp of power, wielding against them a fearfully unequal force, and exalt it to the high standing of independence among the nations of the earth. In that enviable station on the page of history, with his compatriots, from the character of a forlorn Irish redemptioner, he was elevated to that of one of the fathers of the republic.

The estimation in which he was held in the assembly of Pennsylvania, may be inferred from the nature and importance of the duties intrusted to him and others, in the various committees of which he was a member, to investigate and report to that body, for their consideration and decision. *At the period of his entering upon political affairs, the public*

mind had been universally excited by the proceedings of the British parliament, affecting the rights and interests of the American colonies generally; and that agitation, though mitigated by subsequent enactments, was far from being quieted. A jealousy had been raised among the colonists, by the claim set up by the parent government, in the "Stamp act," of a right to tax the colonies without their consent; and that jealousy remained, after the repeal of that odious and offensive statute, by reason of the claim being still retained. It caused a constant vigilance among the provincials, kept their attention alive, and constantly directed it to the proceedings of the king and parliament, relative to their future measures in relation to the colonies. Of this jealousy and fear of approaching encroachment on their rights, the people of Pennsylvania partook, in common with the citizens of the other provinces. But there were other subjects of great delicacy and much importance. There were contested claims between the proprietors of the charter and the provincial assembly, respecting their powers of government, which continually interfered; and these at that time remained unsettled. About the same time violence had been committed upon the Indians, by some of the white inhabitants of unprincipled and dissolute character, in which several of the natives had been wantonly murdered; and the executive of the province had, with characteristic apathy, suffered the guilty perpetrators to remain unpunished, manifesting no disposition to execute the laws in avenging their injured neighbors of the forest. This unjustifiable conduct on the part of the governor, whose duty it was to have arrested, tried, and punished the offenders in a due course of law, provoked the hitherto peaceable natives, as well as disgusted the men of correct principles in the colony. The people also were alarmed for their own safety, which had become jeopardized, by reason of the menacing conduct of the Indians, who had waited in vain for that justice which they rightfully demanded, and had, for a time at least, confidently expected the government would promptly have rendered them.

It was in the year 1764, that Mr. Taylor was first elected a representative to the provincial legislative assembly of Pennsylvania, where he was soon distinguished by being appointed a member of the committee of grievances. The duties assigned to that committee were highly important, and their magnitude was continually increasing.

The important question which greatly agitated the whole province at that time, that of altering the charter, and in connection with that, the correction of gross abuses which the proprietary government had been for years introducing, claimed the serious investigation of the legislative assembly. In the discussions of these several subjects, Mr. Taylor took an active and very decided part. His decision of character, which was soon perceived by all, gave him a leading influence in that assembly; and that influence he uniformly exerted on the side of the popular interest, and in a steady, but firm opposition to every attempt at an assumption of illegal power on the part of the government, under whatever covering, or in whatever form it appeared.

When the speaker of the Pennsylvania assembly laid before that body the proposal of the house of representatives of the province of Massachusetts Bay, for a general congress of delegates from the several colonies, to meet in New York, in September, 1765, the proposal was unanimously adopted on the same day, on which it was submitted to their consideration, and the delegates immediately appointed. The committee, to whom the duty of drawing up their instructions was assigned, included George Taylor as one of its members. By whomsoever those instructions were drawn up, they evince much wisdom and prudence.

Mr. Taylor was again chosen a representative for Northampton, in the autumn of 1765; and on the meeting of the assembly, he was placed on several important committees, of which he had been an active and efficient member, in the preceding session of the provincial assembly; and he ably and zealously supported all the important subjects which were brought before them.

On their receiving intelligence of the repeal of the "Stamp act," the legislative assembly of Pennsylvania appointed several of their members to draw up an address of thanks and congratulation to the king, expressive of their feelings on that occasion. Mr. Taylor was one of that committee. He continued a member of that assembly during the five years immediately following; and the journals of their proceedings exhibit him the same active and influential member, employed on the same standing committees, and exerting the same influence as formerly. In 1768, he exerted himself in a bold manner, to induce the governor to bring to legal trial and punishment, the miscreants who had murdered several Indians in the vicinity. This duty having been neglected, as has been

mentioned, by the executive of the province, the legislative assembly considered it their incumbent duty to take a special notice of the subject. They accordingly appointed several of their members to draw up, and present an address to the governor, on that occasion, of whom Mr. Taylor was one. The address, though very respectful, and couched in handsome language, contains a rebuke of "his excellency," for his official delinquency, and the neglect of his incumbent duty, which manifested an independence of feeling, and a firmness of resolution, which, however long they might forbear, could not be with safety much longer trifled with. If there had not existed an infatuation in the minds of the supporters of the royal prerogative, it seems as if they must have been persuaded, that measures of conciliation, rather than of exasperation, should have been pursued with a people of such a spirit, even for the sake of their own interest and prosperity. But they blindly pushed onward with a mad obstinacy, until when too late, they became convinced of their error.

Mr. Taylor's private affairs having become somewhat deranged, and his fortune impaired, while he was devoting his time and attention to the public interest, he found it incumbent on him to relinquish the latter, and give his attention to the former for several years. His success in his new estate on the Lehigh, not having answered his expectations, he returned again to Durham, the scene of his early prosperity. During the term of five years of his retirement to private life, he sustained the two offices of presiding judge of the county court, of the county where he resided, and colonel of the militia.

In October, 1775, he was again returned a member of the provincial assembly. Here again he resumed the same elevated standing he had before sustained. He was at once placed on all the important standing committees of the house, and on several others of importance, which the changes in the political condition of the country had rendered necessary. Among these, the most important of all, and which was in fact the principal revolutionary engine of the government, was the committee of safety; of which he was an active and vigilant member.

In this session, the members of the approaching congress were chosen; and again Mr. Taylor was appointed with others to draw up and report instructions for the delegates.

The situation of Pennsylvania at that juncture, required the exercise of great wisdom and prudence, on the part of

public agents. The province had often received special evidences of royal favor, which elicited corresponding affection and gratitude from the people. Many still retained a hope that a reconciliation might be effected, and an open war avoided. A large portion of that community, whose religious principles coinciding with those of the distinguished founder of the colony, were opposed to war, and especially a civil war. They therefore felt a peculiar reluctance to having any measures adopted, which would commit the province to engage in ultimate hostilities with the parent government. There were still a number of men of leading influence in the province, in whose breasts glowed a patriotism as pure, and as warm as in those of a more bold and daring character. All these furnished motives of great delicacy and importance, which operated powerfully on the minds of those who were already persuaded of the indispensable necessity of coming to a speedy decision, relative to renouncing the allegiance of the colonies to Great Britain, and rendered the task of drawing up the instructions to their delegates in congress, very difficult, and highly responsible.

These instructions were drawn up, and sanctioned by the house, in November, 1775, and, among other particulars, contained a clause, utterly prohibiting them from concurring in any propositions which might lead to, or cause a separation of the colony from Great Britain, or change the form of the government of Pennsylvania.

Such was the prevailing state of the public feeling, relative to independence, in the autumn of 1775, in Pennsylvania. But the time was at hand, which was destined to witness a decided revolution of feeling in that province. The disrespect with which the several memorials, remonstrances, and appeals of congress had been treated by parliament, under the management of the ministry, had been gradually weakening their hopes, and confirming their fears respecting the ultimate measures, which their own safety might imperiously demand; thus preparing them, notwithstanding their strong reluctance, to give up their opposition, and bring them to acquiesce cordially in renouncing their allegiance, and in the establishment of independence. The winter and spring of 1776, saw an almost entire change in the sentiments of Pennsylvania. The instructions given to their delegates in congress, in November, 1775, unqualifiedly forbade them to concur in any measure which might lead to, or result in a separation. In June, 1776, instructions were issued to them, which

removed that prohibition, and left them at full liberty to concur with the delegates from the other colonies in congress, "in such measures, including compacts with the other colonies, and treaties with foreign states and kingdoms, as shall be judged necessary for promoting the liberty, safety, and interests of America."

These sentiments of their representatives harmonized with those of the great body of the people ; and the change so great, and so sudden, had been wrought by means of the conduct of the British government, which convinced them that their hopes were vain, and that they had nothing to expect in future from the parent country, to which they had been so strongly attached.

Yet, notwithstanding this decided change in the legislature and the people, and notwithstanding the recent instructions given to the delegates in congress, there were several of the delegates of Pennsylvania, then in congress, who held fast to their opposition ; insomuch, that on a trial of the question by the several colonies, according to the vote of their delegates, the voice of Pennsylvania was decided in favor, only by the vote of one majority. This was very unpleasant to the legislative body which had issued the recent instructions ; and they resolved on electing a new delegation, which became necessary for representing the sentiments of the people truly, and also for securing unanimity in the final vote on the great subject of independence. Accordingly, on the twentieth of July, the convention of the state reappointed Mr. Morton, Doctor Franklin, Robert Morris, and Mr. Wilson, who, of the old delegation, were in favor of the decisive measure, and supplied the places of the dissentients, by electing Mr. Taylor, Mr. Ross, Mr. Clymer, Doctor Rush, and Mr. Smith ; all of whom were well known to have been fully persuaded of its necessity. They were chosen by the convention with a full knowledge of their sentiments, and expressly with a view to insure an unanimous vote in favor of the independence of the United States.

Mr. Taylor was now brought into congress, and with his entire approbation of the measure which had been determined by the vote of congress on the fourth of July, he, with many others, set his signature to the declaration of that vote, which was not ready for signature until several weeks subsequent to the day on which it was passed by congress. The Declaration of American Independence, now engrossed on the parch-



**JAMES WILSON,**

ment roll, received his signature on the second day of August, 1776.

Having seen his favorite object, the independence of his adopted country, realized, and having finished his own agency in effecting it; after remaining about one year in congress, he withdrew from all public life and employments, and settled in Easton, in the vicinity of his estates. Here, after spending four years, in attending to his private concerns, he closed his life on the twenty-third of February, 1781, at the age of sixty-five years.

**JAMES WILSON.**

THIS gentleman, who made a conspicuous figure in Pennsylvania, both in her delegation to congress, and in other public services, during the revolutionary period, was a native of Scotland. His father gave him a good classical education, and with that, at the age of about twenty one, he embarked for America, and arrived in New York. From thence he went to Philadelphia, the beginning of the year 1766. His recommendations to gentlemen of eminence in that city, were of such a character, that he soon obtained employment as a teacher in the Philadelphia College and Academy, under the patronage of the Rev. Doctor Richard Peters. He formed an intimate friendship with Mr. Wilson, which continued unimpaired to the close of his life.

But after a few months he left that employment, and commenced the study of law in the office of Mr. John Dickinson, one of the most celebrated barristers of that age in the United States. After having passed about two years in his studies, he entered on the practice of his profession, and went first to Reading, but soon removed to Carlisle in that province. His success in the latter place was flattering; and he there began to develop the powers of his mind, and evince the professional pre-eminence for which he was distinguished through his life. From Carlisle he went to Annapolis in Maryland. There he remained but one year, and then removed to Philadelphia, in 1773, and fixed his residence in that city for life.

Not long after he commenced his professional career, a case of great importance was brought into one of the courts,

between the proprietors of Pennsylvania and a great land-dealer. The latter, Mr. Samuel Lawrence, engaged Mr. Wilson as one of his counsel. Mr. Beverly Chew, the attorney general, was opposed to him. So favorable was the impression which Mr. Wilson made by his plea, on the minds of his associate counsel, that they concluded to submit the cause without further argument. During the session of that court, his reputation as an able lawyer was fully and firmly established; and important business flowed in upon him at once.

At the time of his landing in America, he considered this as his country, and he became, from that time, an American in principle. To this character he firmly, and with entire consistency, adhered to the day of his death. He was a genuine republican on the principles of General Washington.

He early enlisted his feelings and efforts in an active opposition to the British claims upon the colonies; and warmly and very ably defended their rights, against the designs of the ministry.

A provincial convention for Pennsylvania was called in 1774, to meet in Philadelphia, of which Mr. Wilson was a member for that city. The part he took, and the talents he displayed in that assembly, made him extensively known, as a gentleman distinguished for political science, and of commanding popular eloquence. In that convention Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Wilson were recommended for delegates to the congress. But the influence of Mr. Galloway, who was speaker of the house, and opposed personally to Mr. Dickinson, and politically to both, was sufficient to prevent their election at that time. He was, however, chosen in May, 1775, together with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Willing, and added to the existing Pennsylvania delegation, only about eight months after the time when a nomination of him could not be carried. He was again appointed to the same office in November, 1775; and in July, 1776, when he subscribed to the Declaration of Independence; and in March, 1777.

In September of 1777, a jealousy of his rising reputation, and an excited party spirit, had gained such an ascendancy in their general assembly, that Mr. Clymer and Mr. Wilson were superseded and left at home, and others appointed in their room. This placed him for a time in private life.

Previous to his being introduced to a seat in the congress, and while he resided in Carlisle, at the commencement of military movements, preparatory to the anticipated hostilities,

Mr. Wilson was designated for military honors. He was chosen colonel of a regiment, to be raised and equipped in the county of Cumberland. The public stores and magazines in Carlisle were committed to his charge. This, in that season of jealousy, showed the confidence reposed in him by the public. He was also appointed to the delicate and important duty of a commissioner to treat with the Indians; which duty he discharged with success.

In 1782, he was again brought forward to the honorable station from which he had been dropped, by the rivalry and opposition of his political adversaries. His talents and integrity were too decided, and of too much importance, to be long neglected by means so disreputable, and by rivals so inferior, in many respects, as were those who supplanted him.

On the twentieth of November of that year he was elected to a seat in congress, and took possession of it early in January, 1783. In the same year he was appointed by the executive council, with several others, an agent and counsellor to manage the celebrated controversy of Pennsylvania with Connecticut, respecting the Wyoming lands. To his efforts in arguing that great cause, which occupied him several days, may be ascribed to a considerable extent, the final settlement of that long contested and angry claim.

In the year 1785, he was again returned a representative to congress in November, and took his seat in the following March. But whether he was in congress serving his state, or in private life, attending to his own immediate concerns, his talents and character was too conspicuous to be neglected. The French minister plenipotentiary, Mr. Gerard, appointed him advocate general of the French nation in the United States. This was an office of much importance, and required a man to fill it eminently learned in national law, and that particular part of it which relates to regulating commercial intercourse between independent governments. In 1781, the king of France confirmed the appointment made by his minister. As the United States had but just sprung into a national existence, every thing here was new; and according to the existing treaty, the functions of consuls and other officers employed in commercial agencies, were to be originated; and this, almost without rule or precedent, from which assistance could be derived. Mr. Gerard stipulated with Mr. Wilson on his nominating him, that an annual salary was to be allowed. Without that Mr. Wilson would have declined the offer. But after considerable delay, during which time he

had devoted himself to its duties, it pleased the king to signify that it was not his pleasure to sanction that stipulation. Consequently Mr. Wilson resigned his office ; not indeed with the most agreeable feelings respecting the manner in which he had been treated.

During his absence from congress, that body were not unmindful of his worth. In the latter part of 1781, he received an appointment of director of the bank of North America which Robert Morris had instituted to aid in the financial concerns of the government, and which was so greatly conducive to their prosperity.

While he was in congress, he was considered as one of the ablest members of the house, and was singularly happy in the manner, as well as persuasive and forcible in the matter of his public addresses. His services on important committees, were probably more numerous than those of any of his colleagues, during the time he was a member. They would occupy too large a space in this essay, were a particular enumeration of them to be inserted. Suffice it to remark, that he was, during the time he was in congress, as appears on the journals, placed on all the most important committees, and on others, both of which in the aggregate, comprised more than were allotted to any other member of that house.

Mr. Wilson was a delegate to the convention which was assembled in 1787, for framing a constitution for the United States. He was an active and leading member of that distinguished assembly. On the 23d of July, after much discussion, a committee of five members was appointed to report a constitution, conformably to the proceedings of the convention. Mr. Wilson's name stands first on that committee. His signature appears to that document. He was a member of the state convention which adopted the new constitution, on behalf of Pennsylvania. Having successfully exerted himself in favor of its adoption, it was resolved to celebrate the event with tokens of rejoicing, as being highly auspicious to the best interests of the whole country. Mr. Wilson was selected by his fellow citizens, to deliver an oration on that occasion.

After the adoption of the federal constitution by that state, a convention was called for altering the constitution of Pennsylvania. Mr. Wilson was returned a member of this convention also.

After the new government had been so far organized, as to elect a president of the United States, and to hold the first

session of congress under it, it became the duty of General Washington to form the national judiciary, under the new constitution. In performing this duty, Mr. Wilson was nominated by the president one of the judges of the highest court of the nation. That nomination having been sanctioned by the senate, he accepted the appointment, and held the office to the end of his life.

In 1790, after a law professorship had been established in the college of Philadelphia, Mr. Wilson was appointed the first professor; and in 1792, when the college of Philadelphia and university of Pennsylvania were united, a professorship of a similar kind was established in that seminary, and he was appointed to fill it.

In 1791, he was unanimously appointed by the house of representatives of the state, to revise and digest the statutes of the state. But after some delay, during which he had made considerable progress in executing the task, the senate refusing to concur with the house in sanctioning the object for which the appointment had been made by the house of representatives, the business was suspended, and never finished.

While he practised as a lawyer, he was confessedly at the head of the Philadelphia bar; and his business was extensive, and secured him an engagement in almost all the important causes brought into the court. His reputation as an advocate was not surpassed, perhaps not equalled, by any of the able barristers, who were practitioners at the Pennsylvania bar.

He was twice married. His first wife was a daughter of William Bird, Esq. of Bucks county. They were married in 1771, or 1772; their offspring were six children. She died in April, 1786. He afterwards married Miss Hannah Gray of Boston, by whom he had one child, which died in infancy.

In 1798, while on a judicial circuit in North Carolina, he was attacked with a severe paroxysm of strangury, at the house of his friend and colleague, Judge Iredell, in Edenton; where he closed his eventful life, at about the age of fifty-six years.

## GEORGE ROSS.

THIS gentleman, who was born in New Castle, in the state of Delaware, in the year 1730, was the son of the Reverend George Ross, a respectable clergyman, and minister of the episcopal church in that town.

Mr. Ross, from a personal knowledge of the advantages of a liberal education, and discovering a favorable disposition, as well as promising talents in his son, resolved on giving him all its advantages. He consequently commenced a course of instruction with him early in life, and pursued it with faithful care and assiduity, till he had accomplished his object. He became an uncommon proficient in the ancient languages. And at the age of eighteen, he commenced the study of law, under the instruction of an elder brother, then a member of the Philadelphia bar in good reputation. In due time he was admitted to the bar, and fixed his residence in Lancaster, which was at that time (1751) on the western limits of European settlements in Pennsylvania. There he gave his attention assiduously to the duties of his profession, and soon established a reputation, which secured him an increasing and lucrative business. He was also appointed to the office of procurator to the king, which was considered an honorable place, and one to which those only were appointed in the colonies, who were esteemed as distinguished in the profession of law.

Early after Mr. Ross settled in Lancaster, he connected himself by marriage with Miss Ann Lawler, a lady of very respectable connections.

The first account of his appearance in public life, is in 1768, when he was chosen a member for Lancaster, to represent that town in the legislature of Pennsylvania. He was afterwards repeatedly rechosen to represent that town; and uniformly so conducted as to receive the approbation of his constituents, and the confidence and respect of his colleagues.

He possessed a benevolent disposition, which he was frequently called on to exercise in behalf of the Indians. For, although the system adopted by Mr. Penn was generally pursued with them, so as to obtain and secure their confidence, by an uniform course of honesty and sincerity, yet there were some who were unwilling to deviate from it, and to deceive and defraud that simple people. Mr. Ross uniformly

espoused and vindicated the cause of the Indians, and from principle acted as their protector. The disposition to depart from the system of William Penn, was not confined to people of the lower class, with whom it might have been expected; but some of the governors of the province were at times willing to interfere in the concerns of the Indians; and when they did they generally excited feelings which they intended to prevent, or allay.

Like the patriots of that day, he had his attention early excited, and steadily fixed on the measures of the English government, which were the beginning of the course they intended to pursue, with reference to the American colonies. He saw their tendency to subject the colonists to a state of oppression and vassalage, which he considered unjust; and which, if not withstood, would deprive them of some, if not all of their dearest rights and privileges, as free subjects of the British empire. Hence, when the spirit of opposition was roused in other colonies, and a proposal was made to assemble a convention of delegates from the several provinces, to meet in Philadelphia, and consult on the general interests of the whole, and agree upon proper measures to be pursued for their preservation from tyranny and oppression, he hailed the event as an omen for good, and promoted it with all his influence and exertions.

In the month of July, next after the proposals had been received by the assembly of Pennsylvania, to convene a congress from the several colonies, which had been communicated from Virginia, Massachusetts, and other provinces; the assembly unanimously resolved to appoint a committee of seven members on the part of Pennsylvania, to meet in the proposed congress in September following. Mr. Ross was chosen one of these members; the time when, and place where the congress was to meet, were not then determined; but as is well known, it did meet in Philadelphia on the 5th day of September, 1774. Mr. Ross was directed by the assembly which elected him to that delegation, to draw up the instructions by which he and his colleagues were to regulate their conduct when assembled.

From the 5th of September, 1774, when Mr. Ross took his seat in congress, he continued a member of that body by repeated elections, until January, 1777, when indisposition of body rendered it expedient for him to retire; this permission he asked for and obtained, and he then left congress. His conduct while a member, so fully met the approbation of his

constituents, that they passed a resolution forthwith to transmit the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds out of the stock of Lancaster county, as a testimony of their sense of the manner in which he had discharged his duty in congress; and that he be requested to accept of it, as a testimony of their approbation, and in part compensation for the sacrifices he had made, by neglecting his own private business, that he might attend to that of the public. This gratuity so honorably proffered by them, bearing with it a testimony so honorable to himself, he declined in a manner expressive of his own patriotic feelings.

Mr. Ross continued to be chosen to represent his constituents of Lancaster in the Pennsylvania legislature, during the period he served as a delegate in congress; no existing law at that time rendering the two offices incompatible. He was among the early leaders in that provincial legislative assembly; and forward, if not foremost, in proposing measures for the defence and protection of the community against the injuries they might sustain from an invasion by a British force. This it was apprehended might take place so early as 1775, and he was active on special committees of that assembly, in providing the requisite means for repelling it; and for devising ways and means, generally for procuring arms and munitions of war, that they might be in readiness against the time when they might be wanted.

They indeed generally adopted measures to be prepared against the anticipated event of open hostilities with the mother country, similar to those adopted and prosecuted in the other colonies. All these received Mr. Ross's entire and cordial approbation, and his zealous co-operation, in maturing them, and carrying them into effect. Whether in congress, or in the provincial legislature, or the convention which was organized after that was done away; whether acting on committees, or in an individual capacity, or in his professional character, as an advocate for the oppressed, or a friend to the Indians in that province, Mr. Ross every where appeared the same; and uniformly exhibiting the character of an intelligent decided patriot, the able and liberal politician, the fearless and upright advocate of the persecuted and oppressed. In the last character he ranked high among that class of men of brilliant talents, in which were included the names of Biddle, Wilson, and Serjeant, comprising a constellation of legal talent, which could scarcely have been exceeded in any other province on the continent.



At the period now under review, several persons were prosecuted for a supposed adherence to the British ; and the excitement was so great against engaging in their defence, that it was feared it might be attended with some hazard from an exasperated populace. But this apprehended peril caused no intimidation in the minds of the independent and upright bar of Pennsylvania ; and Mr. Ross and Mr. Wilson in particular, fearlessly engaged in their defence, and acquitted themselves in the performance of the duty they had undertaken, in a manner highly creditable to their professional talents, independence, and benevolence.

In April, 1779, he received the commission of judge of the court of admiralty for Pennsylvania. He was suffered, however, to discharge the duties of that office but a short time ; for in July following the appointment, his useful life was terminated by a violent attack of the gout.

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## DELAWARE.

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### CÆSAR RODNEY.

THE grandfather of this gentleman came from England to Pennsylvania, soon after William Penn had commenced the settlement of that province. He resided in Philadelphia a short time and then went and planted himself in the county of Kent, in what is now the state of Delaware. He appears to have been a very popular man in that region, and discharged with fidelity the duties of several posts of honor and distinction. His youngest son, Cæsar, by reason of his other children having died without heirs, inherited nearly the whole property of his father ; which was then considered a handsome fortune. He declined all public official employment, preferring the quiet tranquillity of private life, to the troubles and intrigues, which too generally are connected with a public station. He had the offer of several of the principal offices of the province ; but adhering to his preference, he declined them all. He married a daughter of Mr

Thomas Crawford, a preacher of the gospel, said to have been the first who made his appearance as a minister in that region. These were the worthy parents of Cæsar Rodney, whose signature is affixed to the parchment on which is enrolled the Declaration of American Independence.

Cæsar Rodney was born in Dover, now the state of Delaware, about 1730. He inherited all the landed property, according to the then existing law of entailment, as the male heir; and the popularity which had been enjoyed by his predecessors, seems to have descended to him, as an appendage to the name and the estate. In 1758, when he was but twenty-eight years old, he was appointed high sheriff of the county of Kent. The term of office having expired, he was commissioned as a justice of the peace, and constituted a judge of all the inferior courts of the county.

It cannot be ascertained precisely, at what period he entered into public life as a legislator; because no records of the journal of proceedings of the legislature, in Delaware province were preserved of an earlier date than 1762. In the autumn of that year, however, he appeared as a representative for the county of Kent. He either had been a member previous to that year, or his character had become so distinguished before he had a seat in that body, that he took the lead in their deliberations, and most important public measures. He was selected as a colleague with Mr. M'Kean to transact important business with the governor, as an agent of the assembly.

About this time appeared the "Stamp act," and some other obnoxious measures of the British parliament, in this country, which excited much alarm among the inhabitants of the colonies, and a spirit of opposition, founded on a firm belief of their unconstitutional character. This spirit was felt to a considerable extent, in the three counties which now constitute the state of Delaware.

The legislature had adjourned, to meet again in September, 1763, but before that time arrived, there was a meeting of the members of the assembly, who proceeded to appoint delegates to attend a congress to be convened in New York, to consult with delegates from other provinces, who were to assemble there on the most eligible course to pursue, for avoiding the evils with which the colonies were threatened; and for protecting their rights and privileges as subjects of the British empire. For that important and honorable mission, Mr. Rodney, Mr. M'Kean, and Mr. Kollock, the speaker

of the house, were chosen by an unanimous vote, by the assembly.

They received explicit instructions for regulating their proceedings in that congress; and having attended to the duties of their appointment, and returned when the legislature was again convened, they made a full report of their proceedings, and received the unanimous thanks of the house, and a liberal compensation for their services. From this time to the close of the revolutionary war, Mr. Rodney, Mr. M'Kean, and Mr. George Read, were among the most active, leading, and influential characters, who espoused the cause of the colonies in opposition to the British usurpations in Delaware. Mr. Rodney was a member of the legislature of Delaware for several years, and always a leading and active one, in devising and advocating measures of public interest. He was even early opposed to the slave trade, and introduced an amending clause to a bill before the house, for the further and better regulation of slaves, and to entirely prohibit the further importation of them into the colony. Although it was rejected, it was lost only by a majority of two.

The local situation of Delaware, being accessible by water through its whole extent, exposed the inhabitants to continual invasions by the enemy; which was one influential cause of a division of sentiment respecting proper measures to be pursued by the government. Another was an ardent attachment of many of the people to the mother country, from which they were unwilling to be separated. Others still thought that a Declaration of Independence would be premature, and they still indulged a hope that the differences might be amicably settled, and the liberty of the colonies preserved. From these, and perhaps some other causes, there existed such a division among the people, that those patriots to whom the leading management of their public affairs was entrusted, had to encounter many difficulties, by which their efforts for the general good were greatly impeded; and at times almost paralyzed. They however persevered, and had the satisfaction in the end to see the cause triumph, and the object for which they contended, and in obtaining which they made such great sacrifices, in common with their countrymen generally, secured by an acknowledgment of their independence on the part of the contending power.

He was appointed by the provincial assembly in Delaware, on one of the committees who were from time to time, to draw up petitions and remonstrances to the king and parlia-

ment of Great Britain, relative to the grievances complained of by the colonists, and subsequently to correspond with the friends of American interests in other provinces. In all of these, his zealous and undeviating attachment to the privileges and liberty of his country, and his determination to maintain them to the uttermost, are clearly manifested.

Mr. Rodney was laboring for some years under the slow, but ultimately fatal effects of a cancer in his cheek ; which at length, so much impaired his health, as to compel him to withdraw from public employment, and resort to Philadelphia for medical aid. He even had it in contemplation at one time, to cross the Atlantic, for the same purpose, if he failed of success in Philadelphia. Although he procured only partial relief there, he was prevented from proceeding to Europe, by the threatening aspect of the times.

He was a member of the provincial assembly in 1769, and chosen speaker. He held that office during several of the succeeding years. He was also appointed chairman of the committee of correspondence, and in that station he kept up a constant correspondence with distinguished gentlemen in the other provinces. That correspondence, which was carried on in all the colonies, by an interchange of views, and mutual communication of intelligence, tended to promote a harmony of feeling, and a union of purpose, through the country, which was essential for the success of their cause. To obviate jealousies, to quell insurrectionary movements, to rouse the feelings of the languid, and to encourage the fearful, though true friends to the American cause, Mr. Rodney labored industriously, and with considerable success, among the inhabitants of Delaware.

On the first day of August, 1774, a convention of delegates from the three counties, convened by a circular which he addressed to them, as speaker of the house of assembly, met in New Castle, to determine what measures they should adopt, on behalf of their province, in relation to the existing state of the country, and to consult and decide respecting calling a general congress of delegates from all the colonies. He was unanimously appointed chairman of that meeting. After they had resolv'd that such a measure was demanded by the state and circumstances of the colonies. He, together with Thomas M'Kean, and George Read, Esquires, were appointed delegates for Delaware to the first continental congress, which met in Philadelphia, on the first Monday of September following. He took his seat in that body on the fifth day of that

month, and the next day was placed on the grand committee of that body, whose duty it was to state what were the rights of the colonies, and to enumerate the instances in which those rights had been invaded, and violated, by the English government.

The same meeting which appointed him and his colleagues delegates to that congress, furnished them with instructions, by which they were to regulate their conduct in that assembly. And when they reported their proceedings on their return, the assembly passed an unanimous vote, approving entirely of all that they had done. In confirmation of their approbation, on the day following, they again elected them representatives to the succeeding congress. During his absence, under this second election, the legislature appointed him a brigadier general of the province. He now sustained high offices in both civil and military life; in the latter of which, he was in a short time called to active service, in defence of his invaded country. The urgency of public business at that time, was peculiarly pressing. Owing to some private concerns which required his attention, he had obtained leave of absence for a short time, and had returned home for the purpose of adjusting them. But he had scarcely arrived at his residence, when he was summoned back, on account of some highly important business which was depending, and for the accomplishment of which it was deemed essential to have as full a delegation present as possible. The business before congress at that time, so urgent as to require his immediate return, was undoubtedly that which preceded, and prepared the way for deciding the great question of independence.

The situation of Delaware, the inhabitants being much divided in sentiment on the great political measures of the country, demanded Mr. Rodney's presence, both at home and in congress. He was wanted at home, to superintend and arrange the military department, and the measures of defence required for the security of the state. He was, therefore, necessarily absent from his seat at different times, to attend to the discharge of his military duties. But at the time of taking the vote on the question of independence, he was in his seat, and gave it his cordial sanction. He immediately after returned to his constituents; and they having heard the communication of what congress had done, approved of it by acclamation. Probably few men have been more highly popular at any time, and in any community, than General Rodney. Yet, notwithstanding this, he was soon to

experience the instability of all such favor, and the versatility of popular opinion.

In the autumn of 1776, the people of Delaware called a convention, to frame a constitution of government for the state, and to elect delegates to the next congress. On this occasion, by an union of the tories who were numerous in the state, and of various other parties, they contrived to secure a majority against his re-election, and left him out of congress, together with Mr. M'Kean. He, however, still retained the office in the committee of safety, and the committee of inspection. The duties connected with these, he could attend to, while superintending his own private concerns. The latter had suffered much by his want of care during his absence; and the act of the convention, by which he was superseded, left him at leisure to pay the attention to them which they required.

Colonel Haslet, who belonged to General Rodney's brigade, had gone to New Jersey, with some of the Delaware troops, and fell in the battle at Princeton. After his death, General Rodney concluded it would aid the cause, and especially prove some consolation to the men of his command, if he were to be present with them in New Jersey. Being sincerely engaged in promoting the cause, and ever ready to render his aid where it might be most beneficial, he repaired to the late scene of action, to afford all the relief and comfort in his power to the suffering troops of Delaware, then in actual service. On his way to New Jersey, he saw Lord Stirling in Philadelphia, who ordered him to remain at Princeton for the purpose of forwarding the troops to the army, as fast as they arrived there on their way.

He remained there with the army, about two months, and was very actively engaged in those services which devolved on him, as a brigadier general; and even after the term of enlistment of the Delaware troops had expired, he offered to continue with the army, and render any services which the commander in chief might be pleased to assign to him. But situated as the army then was, General Washington, in a letter highly complimentary and honorable, in reply to his offer, deeming his presence not then necessary, permitted him to return to his family.

Soon after he reached home, he was appointed a judge of the supreme court, which had just then been organized, under the new state constitution. But preferring his military command, for the present at least he declined accepting that

office. This appointment, as it showed that he had not lost the esteem and confidence of the public, must have been grateful to his feelings; and that he had not, was soon evinced in a manner still more conclusive and gratifying.

There was an insurrection in the county of Sussex, in which many who had been hostile to his election resided and they feeling the need of his assistance to quell it, issued an order for him to proceed thither, with an armed force sufficient for the purpose. This order he promptly obeyed, and succeeded in restoring order and harmony, for a time, at least, in that agitated and disaffected portion of the state.

Shortly after this was done, the British army landed on the shore of the Chesapeake Bay, intending to march to Philadelphia. General Washington having taken up a position in the northern part of Delaware, with the intention of opposing their progress, was in want of aid. General Rodney collected all the forces he could gather in the county of Kent, and marched immediately to his assistance; and took his station south of the main army, by direction of the commander in chief, with a view, if possible, to get between the enemy and his shipping, while he was watching his motions. The service in which he was then engaged, was impeded very much, and rendered almost abortive, by the misconduct of the militia. They came out in the morning, and took the liberty to return to their homes before sunset.

Not long after the close of that expedition, the political affairs of Delaware having experienced a considerable change, General Rodney was again called to take his seat in congress. But still there were too many men of influence, who continued cold and backward in promoting the plans of the general government; and he deemed it best for him to remain in the state, until the legislature finished its session. He hoped some important improvements might result from the proceedings of that assembly, which he trusted would be benefited by his presence at home. While he was thus waiting, and within the time he proposed to remain, he was chosen president of the state. The office he knew was difficult and arduous. But he thought his duty called him to accept it, with the hope that he might be more useful to the country; and such was his patriotism, that he always made his own interest and private inclination give place to a conviction that the public interest required the sacrifice.

He held the office of president of Delaware about four

years, and was perpetually harassed and vexed by the conduct of the inhabitants. Their exposure to the incursions of the enemy, which, owing to their peninsular situation, occurred almost daily, the pressing demands continually made on them for supplies of various kinds for the army, and their nearly exhausted condition, must plead much in their behalf. The resources of the country were greatly diminished, and the demands on them were perpetually increasing, without any immediate prospect of a termination. These calls were so imperative, that they involved the alarming alternative of submitting to an incensed enemy, or keeping together an army, so hard pressed with hunger and nakedness, that it was on the eve of disbanding. During his presidency, he made every possible exertion to procure aid in support of the general cause; and in some degree, though far short of his wishes, he succeeded in increasing the strength and augmenting the resources of the general government. His cancer, during this period, was making a slow but steady progress in impairing his health, and undermining his constitution. In this situation, he resolved to relinquish public employment, and retire to the tranquillity of private life. He was twice afterwards elected to congress; but he never took his seat. The increasing ravages of his disease, which had afflicted him from his youth, had wrought such a change in his general health, as in connection with the fatigues of public employment, long continued, and attended with many trying and perplexing occurrences, determined him to retire to the enjoyment of domestic quiet. His situation imperiously demanded it. He was the subject of a disease, for which it is hitherto acknowledged, there is no certain remedy. Conscious that he was gradually wasting away, he needed entire abstraction from the bustle of public life, that he might be prepared to leave the world in peace.

He is supposed to have died early in the year 1783; but the exact date of his decease we have not the means of ascertaining. He was but fifty-three years old at the time of his death.

General Rodney was, in his political principles, a firm, consistent, uniform whig. Though fully persuaded of the entire correctness of his own views, he was not possessed of that inexorable, persecuting spirit towards others, who differed from him, which actuated not a few in the country, even to extermination, if they could get them within their



power. One instance, in which his character was illustrated in an amiable point of light, we take the liberty to introduce.

While he was governor of Delaware, a gentleman of Dover, who before the war had been popular, and highly respectable, had so exasperated the patriotic inhabitants, by some imprudent acts of his, in favor of the royal cause, that they had determined to arrest him for high treason. The consequences of such a measure, at a time of high party excitement, and under such circumstances as then existed, particularly in Delaware, may be easily inferred. The gentleman's life would, in all probability, have been offered up a sacrifice to an indignant population. Governor Rodney well understood the violence of a mob; and, although he considered the man as having done much amiss, he sent immediately to him, so soon as he had learned what was in contemplation, and had him brought to his own house. This was in the evening before the arrest was to have taken place, and at a time when escape had become impracticable. In the morning the mob collected to execute their purpose, and found the object of their rage had withdrawn. On learning where he was, they rushed, in a tumultuous manner, to the governor's residence, and demanded their victim. The governor met them with a calm spirit, and acknowledged that he had been very imprudent, and had done what was unjustifiable, yet he had surrendered himself into the hands of the chief magistrate; that he had become answerable for his appearance, and would see that justice was done to all. This address of the governor so far pacified the mob, that reposing confidence in his decision, they retired; and the gentleman, thus protected, learning wisdom from the occurrence, conducted more prudently afterwards, and escaped with his life.

General Rodney possessed a fund of wit and sarcasm, which he sometimes indulged, in a way of pleasantry, with much effect.

Mr. Rodney possessed one peculiarity, which has been known to exist in others; but is believed not very common. He chose always to shun scenes of sorrow; and consequently avoided approaching the death bed of his most intimate friends. This seems to have been constitutional.

From the operation of local causes, his popularity was, for a season, in a waning condition. But, by pursuing an uniform course, of entire consistency between avowed principle

and conduct, he rose above the temporary depression, into which his enemies had cast him ; and the termination of his life was lamented, and his memory was cherished, with respect and gratitude, by his survivors generally in the state where he lived, and in whose service he patriotically spent his life.



### GEORGE READ.

THIS gentleman was of Irish parentage. His grandfather was a man of wealth, who resided in Dublin, in Ireland. One of his sons, whose name was John, left the place of his nativity, emigrated to America, and settled in Cecil county, in the province of Maryland, where he became a respectable planter. But not long after the birth of George, his eldest son, he removed from Maryland, and fixed his residence in the adjoining province of Delaware, on the head waters of Christiana River. George's birth was in the year 1734 ; and he was the oldest of six brothers.

The fact has been more than once noticed in the course of these memoirs, that respectable classic schools were few in number, in the southern part of what is now the United States, in the first half of the eighteenth century. Such was the fact, when young Read was of a suitable age to commence the education which his parents intended to give him. The most respectable seminary, nearest to Mr. Read's residence, was at Chester, in Pennsylvania. In that his parents placed him for a time ; and there he prosecuted the study of the learned languages, in which he made reputable progress, for the time he remained at that school. At no very distant period, however, his father, judging that it would be more conducive to the advantage of his son, removed him from Chester, and put him under the care of the Reverend Doctor Allison, of New London, in the same province. He had the reputation of possessing, in an eminent degree, the qualifications for instructing youth, and carefully watching over their characters and conduct, much to their future advantage.

In proof of the correctness of this remark, it will be sufficient to state, that Charles Thompson, the venerable secre

tary of the old congress, Hugh Williamson, a member of that memorable body of statesmen, and Doctor Ewing, provost of Pennsylvania university, were pupils of Doctor Allison, and fellow students with Mr. Read. This gentleman continued under the care of Doctor Allison, till his seventeenth year, and then commenced the study of law, under the instruction of John Moland, Esq. an eminent barrister, in Philadelphia.

The want of extensive libraries, in any of the professions, in this country, at that early period, was realized as an impediment in the progress of young men, in their way of acquiring scientific eminence, except in a comparative view. Mr. Read, in common with others, experienced this inconvenience. But, in the use of the means at his command, he was diligent and assiduous. The proofs of this fact were evinced in his own extensive library, after he had been in business a number of years.

He possessed the confidence of his instructor, before he was through with his preparatory course, to such an extent, that he entrusted his docket, and committed his attorney's business to his management almost exclusively.

Mr. Read was admitted to the bar at the early age of nineteen years.

By the laws then existing, where his father's property was situated, Mr. Read, being the eldest son, was entitled to two shares of his father's estate. The following fact may serve to give the reader a correct estimate of the moral correctness of his character, and the generosity of his feelings at an early period of his life. Immediately on his admission to the bar as a practising lawyer, he voluntarily released by deed all the legal right he had to the estate of his father, in behalf of his other children, alleging as his reason for it, that he had received the full amount of his share in the expenses incurred for procuring his education. His sense of uprightness influenced him to that act, as he often said it would be a virtual fraud upon the other heirs if he did not do it.

He settled in the county of Newcastle, in Delaware, in 1754, and commenced practising law there and in some of the adjacent counties in Maryland. He had to enter the race amid competitors of high professional and intellectual reputation; but he soon obtained a full practice, and at the end of nine years from his commencing business, he succeeded John Ross as attorney general for the three lower counties on Delaware, an office which had till that time, been filled by the attorney general of Pennsylvania. He retained that office

till he was elected a delegate to congress in 1774. He then resigned it, alleging as his reason for doing so, that a discharge of his duties in congress, was incompatible with retaining and discharging the duties of an office held under the authority of his Britannic majesty.

In the year 1763, he was united by marriage to a lady of a well cultivated mind, superior understanding, and exemplary piety. She was a daughter of the Reverend George Ross, who had been pastor of a church in the town of Newcastle, for half a century.

When the contest between Great Britain and her colonies commenced, in 1765, Mr. Read held an office under the crown. He was a man of extensive influence, and he well knew what advantages availed him if he espoused the royal cause, on the one hand, and the dangers and hardships, if he took part with those who opposed the royal claims, on the other. He nevertheless espoused the cause of his country; his patriotism and integrity, would not suffer him to consult his own personal interest, at the expense of his country's rights. In the month of October of this year, he was one of the representatives of Newcastle county, in the general assembly of Delaware; and he was continued a member during the twelve following years. He was a member of the committees appointed by that assembly, for reporting various addresses to the king of Great Britain, in favor and on behalf of the people of that province.

About that period the "Stamp act" was repealed; but the preamble to the repealing act contained sentiments, which showed that the ministers did not relinquish their favorite plan of taxing the colonists, without their being represented in the parliament; their hopes of relief had been excited somewhat by the repeal of that odious act. But the fears which the preamble had excited, were soon after painfully verified by another act of parliament, by which a duty was imposed on tea, paper, painter's colors, and glass, to be paid by the colonists. The feeling of resistance was now kindling fast, and becoming extensively diffused. The nonimportation agreement was entered into in the adjoining provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania; and Mr. Read, fully approving of the measure, labored arduously to induce the people of Delaware to come cordially into it. For this purpose, he drew up and distributed a circular address among the people. In that attempt he was entirely successful. In fact, in all the measures pursued and systems adopted, to render

British influence unpopular, and for opposing ministerial encroachments on the rights of the colonists, Mr. Read was an able adviser, and a leading man. After the British government had manifested their resentment against the citizens of Boston, in Massachusetts, for their supposed concurrence in destroying the tea, by passing the act called "the Boston port bill;" contributions were made through the country, for affording relief to the suffering inhabitants of that town. For that purpose a subscription was set on foot in the county of Newcastle, and Mr. Read was appointed by the citizens, one of a large committee for circulating it. He was subsequently designated, with Nicholas Van Dyke, Esq. to receive and transmit the amount of the subscriptions to the receiving committee in Boston. These duties were performed with promptitude and fidelity.

In August, 1774, Mr. Read, together with Cæsar Rodney and Thomas M'Kean, Esq's. was appointed by the general assembly of Delaware, delegates to the continental congress, which was to meet the month following in Philadelphia. From that time to the close of the revolution, he continued to represent Delaware in the general congress, with a short interval only excepted. Governor M'Kinley, the president of the province, having been taken a prisoner by the British, Mr. Read being at that time vice president, was called *ex-officio* by that event, to perform the duty of president for a short season. But notwithstanding his attention to his duties in congress, (which were important and arduous at all times, but pre-eminently so, when the subject of independence was brought forward for discussion,) Mr. Read was required to discharge duties highly momentous and interesting to his own state. Whenever he could avail himself of a short absence from congress, he hurried to Delaware, to exert his influence and talents for advancing the common cause among his fellow citizens, in every way in which he might be useful. While at home he would act in the committee of safety, or shoulder his musket and march with the militia to attack the enemy, or to repel their invasions; and in congress, he would act with that august body in procuring and establishing the liberties of the American states as an independent nation.

After Mr. Read had signed the Declaration of Independence, in the year 1776, and a short time after the decisive act was consummated, Joseph Galloway, Esq. observed to him, "that he had signed the declaration with a halter about his neck." Mr. Read's reply shows his view of the measure,

and his determined resolution to discharge what he considered as his duty at all hazards. He said in reply, "It was a measure demanded by the crisis, and he was prepared to meet any consequences that might ensue."

Mr. Read was president of the convention which formed the first constitution of Delaware. That convention met in 1776.

When President M'Kinley was made a prisoner, soon after the battle of Brandywine, Mr. Read was in Philadelphia with his family. That event rendered it necessary for him to return to Delaware, and the accomplishment of the effort was attended with great and imminent hazard. The enemy occupied the west bank of the Delaware River, so as to command every way of passing into the peninsula. He was necessitated therefore, to take the New Jersey shore, and run the risk of crossing the river, and elude, if practicable, the vigilance of the enemy's ships, which were strung along the whole distance in the river. On the 13th of October, 1777, Mr. Read having reached Salem, in New Jersey, and having obtained a boat, to convey himself and family across the river, which at that place, was about five miles broad, he undertook the enterprise almost in view of the ships of the enemy, which were at anchor opposite Newcastle. He had proceeded near to the Delaware shore, when his boat was discovered. It had grounded at such a distance from the land, that it was impracticable to convey his family to the shore, and they could proceed no farther in their boat. In that condition they were discovered by the British, and pursued in a boat, dispatched from a ship of war. They had time to efface every vestige of mark on their baggage, by which they could be discovered and identified as rebels. This was done; and when the enemy's boat came up with his, they were unable to ascertain that he was not, as he represented himself, a country gentleman, who was returning to his home, from an excursion he had made with his family. The commander of the English boat was a boatswain. His companions, like himself, were unsuspecting of any deception, and the presence of Mr. Read's mother, wife, and children, altogether, favored the truth of his representation. They, taking pity on their unfortunate condition, with great good humor, assisted them to land their baggage, and conveyed the ladies and children to the shore; and with their thanks for their kind assistance, took their leave, and returned to their ship. So great a risk

did Mr. Read run of being made a prisoner with all the members of his family.

His return to Delaware, as has been stated, being rendered indispensable, by reason of the capture of President M'Kinley, it subjected Mr. Read to additional duties, beyond those already engrossing his time, requiring his whole attention, agitating his mind, and wearing down his constitution, by their combined influence. The president being taken away, Mr. Read, as vice president, became the executive of course. His solicitude respecting the situation and circumstances of the president; his anxiety to procure his release, and return home; the pressing wants of the continental army, by reason of the tardy movement of the several states, in furnishing the requisite supplies; the exposed situation, and divided condition of Delaware; together with numerous and pressing calls on him, as executive of the state, both from congress, and the commander in chief of the army; seem to have been sufficient to break down, almost any constitution, and shake the resolution of almost any man. But, although often perplexed and burthened, his fortitude never forsook him; and a firm hope of the ultimate success and triumph of the American cause, which he deemed just, and for which he relied on the overruling providence of God, sustained him in his course with a cheerful perseverance to the end; and he lived to realize his reward, in the accomplishment of his desires.

The state of his feelings, during the most benighted and gloomy period of the revolution, was manifested in his various correspondence, through that alarming season. By reason of impaired health, caused by his long and laborious services, and his anxious attention to his public duties, he was constrained to relax in his labors; and in August, 1779, he resigned his seat in the legislature of Delaware. But in the next year he was constrained, by the voice of his constituents and a sense of his duty, to enter again into the service of the state.

In the close of the year 1782, Mr. Read was appointed by congress, one of the judges of the court of appeals in admiralty cases. This appointment he accepted, and held the office during the continuance of that tribunal.

A controversy respecting territory, had arisen between New York and Massachusetts, for the determination of which congress was requested to constitute a federal court. This was done; and in January, 1785, Mr. Read was appointed one of the judges of that special court. He was one of the

delegates to meet others from other states in Annapolis, for forming a system of commercial regulations for the United States. This was in 1786, at the time when the clashing, and interference of state interests, state power, and state regulations, threatened to lay prostrate the peace, and prosperity of the whole country. This state of things, after the peace, was such as the confederation furnished no adequate remedy for ; and its inadequacy in peace was now proved to be such, that the necessity of a federal constitution of general government, furnished with sufficient powers for every purpose, was seen to be indispensable ; and this opened the way very speedily for calling a convention from all the states to frame such a constitution. That convention met in Philadelphia in 1787, and formed the constitution under which we now live, and under which it is hoped the country may prosper and flourish to the end.

Soon after the federal constitution had been adopted by the several states, Mr. Read was elected a member of the senate for Delaware, in the first congress under the new constitution. He occupied his seat in that body until September, 1793, when he was made chief justice of the highest court of Delaware. This important office he held, and performed its duties, with distinguished ability and unbending integrity until 1798 ; when, in the autumn of that year, by a sudden illness, he closed a long and useful life, which had been devoted to the service of his country.



### THOMAS M'KEAN

THOMAS M'KEAN was the son of Irish parents, who came to America, and settled at New London, then a new township, in Chester county, in Pennsylvania. He was born in the year 1734 ; and was the second child of his parents. Their offspring were four children, three sons and one daughter.

The two oldest, Robert and Thomas, after having spent an usual term in an elementary English school, were placed, at an early age, under the care of the Reverend Francis Allison who has been mentioned several times in these memoirs, who was justly distinguished for science, and peculiarly for having



been the early instructor of several of those whose names are inscribed on the national charter of independence. After Thomas had finished his classical course at Doctor Allison's academical school, he entered the office of David Finney, Esq. a practising lawyer at Newcastle in Delaware, as a law student. In a few months such was the confidence he acquired in the public esteem, that he was employed as an assistant to the clerk of the court of common pleas. From that he was appointed a deputy prothonotary, and register of the probate court for Newcastle county. This was before he had attained to the age of twenty years. As the principal in the office resided nearly eighty miles from Newcastle, the duties of it devolved on the deputy; and they were all discharged by him.

Before he was twenty-one years old, he was admitted to practise law, in the courts of common pleas in Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex counties. He acquired business, and rose with considerable rapidity in his profession; and by the time he was twenty-two years of age, he was admitted in his native county; and shortly after, in the city of Philadelphia. The notice of the public was fast attracted towards a young gentleman of so much promise; and he was appointed, in 1756, without any premonition, or any solicitation in his behalf, by the attorney general of the province, his deputy, to prosecute all pleas of the crown in the county of Sussex. He resigned this office voluntarily, after performing its duties faithfully about two years. In the following year, he was admitted to practise in the supreme court of Pennsylvania. In the same year, (1757,) the house of assembly elected him their clerk; the first suggestion of which was communicated to him by the speaker. The same office was again assigned him in 1758. He declined a subsequent election after the close of that year. But in 1762, he was appointed by the legislature, with Cæsar Rodney, Esq. to revise and print the laws of the province, which had been enacted subsequent to 1752.

In this year he commenced his political course, by being elected for the county of Newcastle, a representative to the general assembly; and this was repeated without interruption seventeen successive years. It will serve sufficiently to evince the confidence of those whom he represented, when it is mentioned, that he had, during that term, frequently and publicly requested not to be considered a candidate for their favor; and also, that he had resided in Philadelphia during

the last six years in which he had been chosen their representative.

After his constituents, on his personal request in an address he made to them, had reluctantly consented to dispense with his further services in the legislature, they manifested their confidence in him in a manner as singular as it was flattering; and no less delicate than it was embarrassing. They appointed a committee to wait on him, and inform him, though with unwillingness, they had consented to dispense with his further services; but they requested him to recommend seven gentlemen of the district to be candidates for their suffrages, to represent them in the legislature. This he with great delicacy declined. But on the committee having reported his answer, the request was again repeated, with an assurance that his selection should give no offence, he was almost compelled to make the nomination. He complied, on that assurance; and the whole of the number were chosen by a large majority of the votes. This was an unusual manifestation of reciprocal confidence, and the sincerity on both sides was unquestionable, as was fully shown by succeeding events, through a series of years.

In the county of Newcastle there was a loan office established, mainly for encouraging industrious strangers, who were desirous of becoming inhabitants, to settle in their territory.

The superintendence of this pecuniary depository was committed to three trustees, who were appointed for the term of four years. The confidence of the people in Mr. M'Kean was manifested by giving him the appointment of one of the three trustees for three successive terms, of four years each. Their continued confidence was proved in numerous succeeding instances, as will be seen more fully in the progress of this sketch.

When, on the proposal from the assembly of Massachusetts Bay, to assemble a congress of delegates in New York, in 1765, to take into their consideration the circumstances of the colonies, which were rendered alarming, on account of some proceedings of the British parliament, Mr. M'Kean was returned a delegate for those counties which constitute now the state of Delaware. In that assembly he was appointed, with the celebrated James Otis, of Massachusetts, and Mr. Lynch, a committee to prepare an address to the house of commons. After that meeting closed their business, and he and his colleague, Mr. Rodney, had returned, and

reported their proceedings to their constituents, they received the unanimous thanks of the assembly of Delaware, as a testimony of their entire approbation of their conduct, and the energy and ability with which they had executed the duty intrusted to them, in that congress. Offices were now multiplied upon him in rapid succession.

In 1765, the governor appointed him a sole notary public for the lower counties on Delaware. To this was added the office of justice of the peace, justice of the court of common pleas and quarter sessions, and of the orphan's court, for the county of Newcastle. It was in the terms of the common pleas and general sessions, which were held in November, 1765, and February following, that he, with his colleagues, took the bold stand of ordering the use of unstamped paper, in the proceedings of the court, without regard to the "Stamp act" of the English parliament.

His reputation as a lawyer continued to extend. He was already licensed to practice law in Delaware and Pennsylvania; and in 1766, the judges of the supreme court of New Jersey recommended to the governor to grant him a license to practice in all the courts of that colony, and he was licensed accordingly.

In 1769, he was employed by the assembly, to go to New York, and obtain copies of some important records in that province, which they wished to possess, and retain in Delaware. In 1771, he received the appointment of collector of the customs for his majesty, in the port of Newcastle; and in the following year, being a representative to the assembly, he was elevated to the speaker's chair in that body.

The vigilance of the people had been in some measure allayed by the repeal of the "Stamp act," but not put entirely to rest. It was soon thoroughly roused anew, by another act passed by parliament, soon after the repeal of the former, in which the power was claimed of binding the colonies in all cases whatever. And to test that power, the act, laying a small duty on various articles imported from Great-Britain, soon followed. The crisis had arrived; and on the request of the assembly of Massachusetts for convening a general congress, in 1774, there was a determination through the provinces, which were all equally concerned, to comply with the requisition. In Delaware, Mr. M'Kean was an ardent opposer of the parliamentary measures, and he was elected to represent the lower counties on Delaware, notwithstanding *he then resided in Philadelphia.* He was present at the

opening of that congress, and soon became distinguished among the eminent patriots and statesmen, who composed that great national council. From that time, he was continued by a regular re-election a member of congress, until 1783, when the preliminaries of peace had been signed. He was the only person who commenced his term in the first congress of 1774, and continued a member, without intermission, until after the war was terminated. And while he was thus a representative for Delaware, though residing in Philadelphia, he was acting in the high and responsible office of chief justice of Pennsylvania, after the month of July, 1777. During one year of that period, he acted in the three-fold capacity of representative in congress for Delaware, chief justice of Pennsylvania, and president of congress. While he was engaged in the sessions of congress, the exercise of his various talents was demanded, and rendered on many; and among them, the most important committees, to which the great public interests were submitted. It will not be necessary to enumerate them all. He was a member of that which prepared the confederation; of that which determined appeals from the courts of admiralty; of that for importing arms and ammunition; of that for establishing the claims and accounts against the government; of that for superintending the finances of the state and emission of bills of credit; and a multitude of others; in discharging the duties of which he was industrious, intelligent, and faithful.

Although his name does not appear in the vote for independence on the fourth of July, 1776, through some error in the entry of the journal of congress on that occasion, yet he was present and voted for it. He did not sign the enrolled parchment until many weeks afterwards; none of the members signed it until August, for it was not prepared and enrolled until that time. Several who signed it from time to time, were not even members of congress on the 4th of July, nor until several days afterwards; yet, when the enrollment was ready, being then members, and in favor of the measure, they set their names to the instrument, in the same manner as they would have done had they been present and voted on the final question.

An account of this transaction is given in a letter of Mr. M'Kean, which he addressed to A. J. Dallas, Esq. in 1796, in reply to one previously addressed to him by the latter gentleman, asking information of him respecting it. Mr. M'Kean had publicly manifested his sentiments in favor of the mea-

sure, in a convention of deputies from the committees of Pennsylvania, which met in June preceding the act of congress. He and Doctor Franklin drew up the declaration of that convention, which was full and explicit in relation to it, and urgent that congress would adopt it. He had been uniformly in favor of the measure; and this was well known, both in and out of the walls of congress. Immediately after the vote was passed in favor of independence, Mr. M'Kean was called away to perform duties which were demanded of him as a military officer, and he was absent from the house several months; and his name was not signed to the engrossed parchment, until some time in October of the same year. It was at that time, that he was called away to aid General Washington in New Jersey, at the head of a regiment of associators of Philadelphia, which had chosen him for their colonel commandant.

Ever ready to obey the call of his country, he placed himself at the head of his patriotic command, and marched with them to Perth Amboy, in New Jersey, and remained there ready for active service at any moment. He continued with his regiment until a flying camp was formed, which was deemed adequate; and then being dismissed from that service, they returned to Philadelphia. It was after this absence, and on his return, that he set his name to the enrolled Declaration of Independence.

It is not correct to say, that all who signed the Declaration of Independence were present and voted for it, on the fourth day of July, 1776; neither is it correct to say that all who were present, and gave their vote in favor of it, have their names affixed to that instrument. Henry Wisner, a member from New York, was present, and gave his vote in favor of independence; but his name is not on the parchment. On the contrary, Matthew Thornton, Benjamin Rush, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, and George Ross, were none of them members of congress on that day, nor until several days afterwards. These facts are derived from the before mentioned letter of Governor M'Kean to Mr. Dallas.

While he was absent on his military tour of duty, in New Jersey, he was chosen a member of a convention for forming a constitution for Delaware; he, with only two days delay set off for Dover in that state, to meet that body. He was immediately requested to prepare a constitution for that state. He accepted the appointment, prepared it before the next morning; and when the convention met, presented it. It was adopted by an unanimous vote of the members.

Both Pennsylvania and Delaware claimed Mr. M'Kean as a citizen, and he was willing to serve them both. Hence, in 1777, he was president of Delaware, and chief justice of Pennsylvania; at the same time he was a delegate to congress from the former. At the time of his appointment to the chief justiceship of Pennsylvania, he acted in the several offices of president of Delaware, speaker of the house of assembly, and a representative in congress, from the same state; this was in 1777. In the same year he was compelled to move his family for their security from the enemy, no less than five times; and even then they were exposed to the depredations of the hostile Indians.

He was appointed president of congress, as successor of Mr. Samuel Huntington of Connecticut, in July, 1781; that office he resigned in October following. Although congress accepted his resignation, he was, by a resolve passed on the day following, requested to resume the office, and discharge its duties from the twenty-fourth of October, until the first of November; to this request he acceded. On the 5th of that month, congress passed a vote of thanks to President M'Kean, in testimony of their approbation of his conduct while he was in the chair.

After having held the office of chief justice of Pennsylvania, from the twenty-eighth of July, 1777, until 1799, twenty-two years, he was elected governor of Pennsylvania.

In 1778, in a time of high party spirit in Pennsylvania, an attempt was made to impeach Judge M'Kean, but it failed.

He was chosen a member of the state convention of Pennsylvania, to whom the federal constitution was submitted. He advocated its adoption with great zeal and much ability. He was also a member of a convention of that state, chosen for amending their existing constitution, which experience had proved to be very inadequate to the necessities of the people. His influence was powerfully exerted in favor of framing a new one instead of amending the old; and he, to a great degree, effected his wishes relative to that object.

He was elected governor of Pennsylvania in 1799; and he held the office to the end of the term, for which any man may constitutionally be chosen. He was elected three successive times, and held the office nine years. In 1807 and 1808, another attempt was made in the house of representatives, to impeach him for maladministration in his office of chief magistrate. A committee was appointed to consider and report on a motion presented to the house, for that purpose. This

report led to a presentment of articles of impeachment for the consideration of the house, and a resolve " that Thomas M'Kean, governor of the commonwealth, be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanors."

After several attempts to bring that resolution up for discussion, in which the vote of the house was equally divided, it was at length carried, on the 27th day of January, about seven weeks after the first motion to postpone it until the 2d Monday in January had failed. It was then fairly before the house, and open for discussion. On that same day the house gave it its *quictus*, by their vote of an indefinite postponement. The report of the committee, which closed with the resolve above copied, was highly wrought, positive, and strongly accusatory. The charges were exhibited in strong terms, corresponding with the feelings indulged by one party towards the governor. And the summary manner of getting rid of the investigation adopted by the other, may be viewed as evincing a feeling equally ardent, and a determination equally resolute to shield him from investigation, before the only tribunal which could hear and determine the matter. Thus the business was disposed of. But whether in a way fully exculpating the governor, and redounding to his honor, is still, and probably will continue to be a question, on which wise and good men will hold different sentiments.

Having, in 1808, finished his term of nine years, as governor of Pennsylvania, Mr. M'Kean bid adieu to public life, for the remainder of his days.

After the last war with Great Britain commenced, and an enemy's force had landed on the American shore, at no great distance from Philadelphia ; when it was discovered by the inhabitants that their city was destitute of defence, and that the enemy might attack them in three or four days, a meeting was called by some of the most influential, and interested citizens, to take their condition into consideration.

By special invitation, Governor M'Kean attended that meeting, and presided over its deliberations. This was the last public transaction in which he took an active part.

Having as many vicissitudes, and shared as many honors by the favor of his fellow citizens, as most public men, at length he expired, on the twenty-fourth day of June, 1817, a little past the age of eighty-three years.

He received honorary degrees from two colleges ; from Princeton, in 1781, and from Dartmouth, in 1782. He was an honorary member of several societies in Pennsylvania.

**MARYLAND.****SAMUEL CHASE.**

Among the distinguished and dauntless patriots who were active in bringing about, and establishing the American revolution, few have been more distinguished than the gentleman, whose name stands at the head of this article.

Samuel Chase, the only child of a respectable clergyman of the episcopal church in Somerset county, in the province of Maryland, was born in that county, on the seventeenth day of April, 1741.

The death of his wife, and an invitation to Mr. Chase, to take the pastoral charge of a congregation in Baltimore, occurring almost at the same time, he removed to that city, with his son, then hardly three years of age. The means afforded for acquiring a good education in the southern colonies, at that early period of their history, being very small, the Rev. Mr. Chase undertook the superintendence of that of his son, which he performed with care and fidelity, and laid a foundation for the distinction which he afterwards attained, and displayed, both in the legislative councils of his country, and on the bench of the highest judicial tribunal in the United States.

Being considered as well qualified for commencing his professional studies, by the classical instructions given him by his father, at the age of eighteen years he commenced the study of law, under the superintendence of Mr. Hammond and Mr. Hall, of Annapolis, barristers of good reputation. By his intense application and assiduity, he was deemed qualified for admission to practice before the mayor's court at the age of twenty; and after two years more, he was received as a member of the bar, to practice in chancery, and the other courts in the colony.

He established himself in Annapolis, and soon became distinguished for that intrepidity of character, which he manifested on numerous and trying occasions, during the remainder of his life.

His success in his professional pursuits, was fully equal to his anticipations, and commensurate with the high characte



he early established, for an able and eloquent advocate, and a lawyer, possessing much more than ordinary learning and talents.

Early in life, and before the commencement of those alarming measures of the English parliament, which eventually kindled the flame of American patriotism, provoked open resistance, and finally terminated their colonial union with Great Britain, Mr. Chase became a member of the Maryland provincial legislature, and manifested talents of a superior order, and that independent spirit which he retained through life. The latter he particularly indulged, in what was thought by "*prudent*" politicians uncourty treatment, of the governor and royal partizans of the province. Mr. Chase's feeling of independence, was too elevated to admit of compromise with any man, whom he suspected of timeserving, or obsequiousness.

After the famous "Stamp act" was begun to be put in operation in Maryland, he was connected with the sons of liberty, and a band of youthful patriots, who violently assaulted the public offices, seized on and destroyed the stamps, and burnt the stamp distributor in effigy. In these early displays of opposition to the usurpations of government, which were conducted in a bold, and somewhat violent manner, Mr. Chase bore a leading part; and hence he became very obnoxious to the city government of Annapolis. He was soon engaged in a paper war with the mayor and corporation of that city, in which they sought, by applying to him harsh epithets, to degrade him and to put down the rising influence of a young man, whose bold and daring spirit they saw, unless it was effectually curbed, might in his future progress, become unmanageable and cause them such difficulties, as they did not wish to encounter. But their attempts produced the contrary effect. They brought young Chase into more extensive notice, and secured to him many friends.

When the proceedings of the British parliament had produced the effect of inducing the leading men in Massachusetts to propose a meeting of delegates of the several colonies in congress, in Philadelphia, and they had addressed their proposals to them severally; the several counties of Maryland adopted measures for calling a convention. That convention agreed to the proposal from Massachusetts, and appointed five delegates to meet the first continental congress. Mr. Chase was one of the five. On the same occasion he was also appointed one of the committee of correspondence for the colony of

Maryland. These appointments will serve to show the confidence which was reposed in him by his fellow citizens. To the adherents of royalty he was peculiarly obnoxious.

He met the congress of 1774, in September, according to his appointment.

He was again appointed to the same office in December of that year, to attend the session of congress in May, 1775. He attended, and with feelings of cordiality, united in appointing George Washington commander in chief of the American armies; and went forward with the most decided members of that assembly, in promoting every measure for defending the country against the British invading forces, and their abettors in the colonies. He had no patience for listening to proposals for halfway measures. He early fastened his eye on the ultimate object, which his feelings and judgment, both prompted him to seek for; and he never allowed his attention to be diverted from it for one moment. On its attainment he was convinced depended the safety of his country, and the liberty, prosperity, and happiness of future generations. For its achievement, he exerted every faculty of his mind, zealously advocated every means, and personally assisted in rendering every measure effectual, so far as practicable. From the beginning of his public career, he proposed to his own mind nothing short of the absolute, unqualified independence of his country.

He was chosen again in the summer of 1775, but the irrelative, temporizing spirit of the Maryland convention, which they pertinaciously adhered to, and expressed in their instructions to their delegates, although irksome to all of their members of congress, were peculiarly unsatisfactory to him. Feeling as he did, and firmly persuaded as he was, that the successful issue of the contest in which the colonies were engaged, depended on their withdrawing their allegiance from Great Britain; and that this must be effected, or the colonies be conquered and enslaved; he was impatient of delay. He wished to declare independence at once, that congress might take an attitude, that would command respect among other nations, and lay a foundation for negotiating treaties, and thus procure such foreign aid as they needed; which they could not do so long as they recognized the colonial relation to the British government.

He engaged, with all his constitutional ardor, in every measure for increasing the military forces, and strengthening the defences of the country. Hence the northern cam-

paign, under the command of Generals Schuyler and Montgomery, became a favorite object with him.

Still restrained by the instructions of the Maryland convention, from favoring any project which might be started in congress, and lead to independence, he, not without satisfaction, accepted an appointment by congress, with Doctor Franklin, and Mr. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, in the spring of 1776, to go to Canada on a mission; for a due execution of which it was deemed highly important to select men of the highest qualifications. Great benefits were expected to result from that mission. But Mr. Chase, however flattering the appointment with such colleagues might be to his ambition, was the more willing to undertake the enterprise, because it would relieve him from the necessity of acting and voting on important questions, which he knew would soon come before congress, contrary to his own convictions of sound policy, and opposed to his ardent wishes. He was thus relieved from the painful embarrassment which his instructions must have imposed on his feelings and judgment, had he been present in congress.

His northern mission, however, did not wholly remove the difficulties under which he labored. For when he returned to Philadelphia, the proposition for declaring independence had already been introduced, while the instructions forbidding him and his associates to raise their hands, or their voices in its favor, were in full force, and the prospect of their being soon removed, was far from flattering. But for reasons which have been mentioned already, the convention having removed those restrictions, left their delegates to act according to the dictates of their judgment and discretion, relative to the great question; and he was at liberty to record his in favor of the measure, and subscribe his name to the instrument declaring it.

It was about this time that an event took place which caused much indignation, and for a time, not a little alarm in congress. A certain Rev. Doctor Zubly of Georgia, was then a delegate from that colony, and present in congress. By some means, now not known, Mr. Chase discovered that he was in correspondence with the royal governor of Georgia. He rose and denounced him to congress as a traitor. Zubly immediately fled, was pursued, but without success. But no material injury to the American cause resulted from his treacherous conduct. This act of Mr. Chase was characteristic of the man. He was equally prompt, bold, and fearless throughout his whole life.

Mr. Chase's re-appointments to congress succeeded each other, from that time, in the manner, and at the dates following. On the fourth of July and the twentieth of November 1776; in February and December, 1777; and he continued his attendance in congress, with the exception of a few weeks only, until the end of the year 1778.

Possessing an uncommon aptitude for the discharge of business, Mr. Chase was appointed a member of almost every important committee in the congress, during the time he was a member. His attention to his various duties thus multiplied, and was unwearied; and his fidelity was never questioned.

One of the disagreeable duties which he had to perform, as chairman of a committee of congress, was presenting a report to that house, in which the committee recommended the apprehension and imprisonment of sundry persons, who were believed to aid the enemy, by giving him information injurious to the American cause. Among the persons implicated, were several wealthy and respectable Quakers of Philadelphia, and other places, who united in publishing their communications to their brethren, from time to time, intentionally so framed as to weaken the hands of Americans, and strengthen those of the British, whose cause he clearly espoused. In such a time as that, there could be no reasonable doubt respecting the right, however there might about the expediency, of such a course as that committee recommended. It must also be acknowledged, that the Friends furnished sufficient cause for the congress to have adopted strong measures with regard to them.

After Mr. Chase left congress, he spent two or three of the last years of the revolutionary war, in the practice of law. To his professional studies he had never failed to devote as large a portion of his time and attention, during his congressional and other employments, as he could abstract from the important duties he owed to the public. Hence he was continually advancing in professional science, at a time and in situations, when it would seem next to impossible that he could have done more than discharge the official duties, which were incessantly crowding on his time and attention. Few persons indeed would have achieved what he did. But his quick and elastic mind was not confined within ordinary limits.

It was during this period of his attention to his professional duties, that being on a call of business at Baltimore, he attended a debating society, at one of its meetings, as a spec-

tator. It was in the hall which they met, that his attention was attracted to a youth, whose style, manner, and elocution, were so peculiar and prepossessing, as to excite a desire to learn his name and vocation. It was the late William Pinckney, Esq. who subsequently became attorney general of the United States, and who held many high and honorable offices both at home and abroad.

Mr. Chase found him an apprentice to a druggist, without resources, and without patronage. He was from Annapolis, where Mr. Chase resided. His manner was so impressive, that Mr. Chase at once advised him to engage in the study of the law. Young Pinckney stated his numerous embarrassments, which were, without assistance, insuperable; and he had no one to whom he might look for the necessary aid, with the faintest hope of success. On hearing this statement, with the feeling of strong sympathy for native genius unfriended, and with that benevolence which warmed his own breast, Mr. Chase invited him home, gave him a seat at his table, the benefit of his instruction, and the use of his valuable and extensive library.

Previous to the revolution, the colony of Maryland held funds to a considerable amount, which were vested in bank stock in England. Subsequent to the conclusion of the war, Mr. Chase was sent by that state as agent, to put in the claim, and to urge a restoration of that property to its rightful proprietors. He succeeded so far in the object of his mission, that the state finally realized the sum of six hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This negotiation was commenced by Mr. Chase; and the justice of the claim so far established, that when his once grateful beneficiary and pupil, became his successor in that agency, while minister of the United States to the court of St. James, having urged the business to a final adjustment, the favorable award was obtained, and the state of Maryland received the above mentioned sum into its treasury.

Among the numerous warmly attached friends of Mr. Chase in his native state, was the highly distinguished Colonel John E. Howard of Baltimore. He was induced, in 1786, to leave Annapolis, and take up his residence in that city. To this determination he was induced in part, certainly, by the urgency of Colonel Howard, which he strengthened by a most liberal offer, communicated in a letter addressed to Mr. Chase. Colonel Howard was owner of a large landed estate in the then vicinity, but now in the midst of the city of

Baltimore. Of this estate he offered to give, and actually did convey, on condition of his settling in Baltimore, one full square sufficient for many city building lots; a property then of much value, and now greatly enhanced. On a part of that noble donation, Judge Chase built the house in which he lived and died; and the property is still possessed by his descendants. These facts are introduced in this narrative, as honorable testimonials of the liberality of Colonel Howard, and his high esteem for the character, services, and moral worth of Mr. Chase. This unrivalled instance of affectionate esteem, and cordial friendship, is alike honorable to both the donor and the recipient.

In 1788, it was found expedient that a new criminal court should be organized for the county and town of Baltimore; the increase of population rendering such a tribunal necessary. The legislature of Maryland instituted it, and appointed Mr. Chase the chief justice. He was also, in the same year chosen a member of the state convention, to which the new constitution for the federal union was submitted, and in a short time after, he received and accepted the appointment of chief judge of the highest court of the state.

In 1796, President Washington, who had been intimately acquainted with Mr. Chase from an early day in the revolutionary war, nominated him a judge of the supreme court of the United States. The senate confirmed the nomination without hesitation; and it was while he was a member of that bench, that he was impeached before the senate of the United States, for malconduct on the bench. This was undoubtedly the effect of strong party feelings. Judge Chase was tried, and acquitted; and retained his seat in the court until his death.

He held the office of judge about fifteen years; during which, he was considered as a very able, learned, and upright judge; and uncommonly prompt in his decisions. Their correctness may be inferred from the fact, that his decisions were rarely reversed, or set aside by the supreme court.

A distinguished member of the bar in Philadelphia, who was neither a personal or political friend of Judge Chase, said of him, that he was the greatest judge he had ever seen.

But it forms no part of the plan of this work to give a history of his individual decisions on the bench, were the writer competent. His proceedings in the celebrated cases of *Fries*, and *Callender*, are not forgotten by those who were

contemporary with those events. These it was principally which were made the grounds of his impeachment.

In the year 1811, his health was so much impaired, that he was disabled for active employments, and his excursions were limited to his favorite exercise, which was riding on horseback. This he continued to pursue until the following spring, when his increased debility obliged him to relinquish it. From this time he languished, until the nineteenth day of June, when he expired, having commenced his seventy-first year.

He was twice married. His children were two sons by the first, and two daughters by the second marriage, all of whom survived him.

He was a professed believer in the Christian religion, and a communicant in St. Paul's church in Baltimore, to the pastoral charge of which his father was invited while he was but a child. Judge Chase commenced his career in life early; at which time he gave unequivocal manifestations of constitutional ardor. This he retained to the close of his life.



## WILLIAM PACA.

**WILLIAM PACA** entered into public life in the province of Maryland. He was born in Wye Hall, his paternal residence, on the east shore of Maryland, in the year 1740. He had the usual advantages, at the time of his youth available in that part of the country; and in his early life, he is said to have been carefully instructed in the principles of morality. He completed his preparatory studies in the Philadelphia College, and then commenced the study of law in the same office with Samuel Chase, afterwards one of the judges of the supreme court of the United States, under the federal constitution. It was there, that those two fellow students and distinguished actors in the revolutionary contest, formed an intimacy which continued uninterrupted, till it was terminated by death. The scene of their studies was Annapolis in Maryland.

Their first appearance in public life was simultaneous in the year 1761, when Paca was only twenty-one years of age. They then both became members of the provincial legislature, and made a favorable impression on the minds of the mem-

bers, of their talents and qualifications for future usefulness in public life.

It was between that time and the year 1771, that there had been a paper war carried on for some time, on the question of the right claimed by the governor of the province, to regulate the fees of civil officers by proclamation. It was conducted with much spirit on both sides. Mr. Charles Carroll had engaged in this controversy, in opposition to the governor's claim, and on the side of the liberty of magistrates to regulate their own fees. He was considered by the citizens of Annapolis as entitled to their thanks for his exertions, "as an advocate for liberty;" which they communicated to him in a public letter, by the hands of Mr. Paca and Mr. Hammond. This fact serves to indicate the feelings of the citizens of that ancient town, at that early period, on the subject of the liberty and rights of the citizens; and the estimation in which they held their youthful candidate for honorable fame and distinction. It is worthy of remark, especially if we take into consideration the divided opinions prevailing at that time in Maryland, that the citizens of Annapolis introduced into their letter of thanks to Mr. Carroll; the sentiment afterward asserted and vindicated by force of arms in the country at large, that a claim of right by government, to impose taxes on a people without their consent, and appropriate them according to the pleasure of the government, without their participation, is an act of tyranny not to be submitted to and endured by a free people.

If any business of public interest was contemplated, requiring the superintendence of special agents, the attention of the community seems to have been, thus early, immediately directed to Mr. Paca. Such was the fact, when the legislature made provision for erecting a state house for their accommodation; they appointed Mr. Paca one of the commissioners for procuring a design, and superintending the erection of that structure. These things are comparatively unimportant, except that they serve to show the rank he held at that early age, in the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens.

When the act of parliament, closing the port of Boston, (commonly called "the Boston port bill") was announced in Maryland, its oppressive and tyrannical character, and the temper in which it was dictated and passed were so manifest, that a spirit of opposition and indignation was universally excited throughout that province. County conventions were



immediately assembled, of deputies chosen by the patriotic portion of those communities, to deliberate on measures proper to be adopted with respect to the vindictive conduct of parliament, and for relieving their suffering fellow citizens of that patriotic town.

This occurrence, which so clearly indicated the determination of the British parliament relative to the colonies, pointing clearly to what they might hereafter expect from that source, if not resisted in season, at once suggested the propriety of concurring with the request of the committee of correspondence in Massachusetts, to appoint delegates from the several colonies, to meet in a congress to be held at Philadelphia. A convention of delegates from the several counties in Maryland agreed to the proposal; and immediately appointed William Paca, Samuel Chase, and three others to attend that congress. "To effect one general plan of conduct, operating on the commercial connection of the colonies with the mother country, for the relief of Boston, and the preservation of American liberty."

In December of the same year, the same delegates with the addition of two others, were elected to represent Maryland in the second congress. Their instructions were, "to agree to all measures which might be deemed necessary to obtain a redress of American grievances." They were elected again the following year.

It is unnecessary to particularize the several employments assigned to him as a member of the committees with which he was associated. It may be sufficient to remark, that as most of the subjects which came before congress for their determination, were submitted to special committees; there was employment sufficient to occupy the whole of the members continually, and that Mr. Paca had an ample proportion assigned to him. The discharge of the duties thus devolved on him, was able and faithful, and such as met with the approbation of congress and his constituents.

To furnish one specimen of the liberal spirit of his patriotism, with that of his friend and colleague Mr. Chase, it is proper to state, that those two gentlemen, knowing the want of pecuniary resources of the government, supplied a volunteer corps of their public spirited countrymen with rifles, from their private funds, at an expense of about a thousand dollars.

While the public sentiment in favor of independence was fast extending, and rapidly increasing in the colonies generally, the people of Maryland, even the patriotic portion of

taem were tardy, and seemed reluctant, at the idea of approaching that crisis, which their delegates in congress clearly perceived, would render the measure indispensable. Hitherto, however, their constituents were not prepared for so bold and decisive an act, as a dissolution of all connection with the British government; and knowing that this step was contemplated by congress, and fearing that the young and ardent politicians whom they had sent to represent them in congress, might be prevailed with to sanction the measure by their act, and thus commit their constituents; the convention, in great apprehension and alarm, issued special instructions, in the early part of 1776, which prohibited them from sanctioning a proposition for declaring the colonies independent; and they carried their opposition so far as to pass a vote, "that Maryland would not be bound by a vote of a majority of congress, to declare independence." That vote serves to show, in the clearest manner, the feeling that prevailed in Maryland, in the beginning of the year 1776. For it contained strong expressions of loyalty and affection towards the king and people of Great Britain; and positively declared that Maryland neither contemplated, nor desired independence.

This state of feeling in Maryland, and the measures which were thus publicly avowed by their leading patriots, indicated, being in direct opposition to, and clashing with their own, placed their delegates in congress, in a perplexing, and most unenviable situation. Although the restrictions laid on Mr. Paca and his colleagues, were sufficiently irksome, as they counteracted their own sentiments; and although they may have thought that the implied censure of their principles which they conveyed, would justify them in manifesting their feelings by resigning their seats, as many persons probably would have done, when placed in similar circumstances; they still retained them, confidently hoping that a change would take place in the sentiments of their constituents, and that they would soon be persuaded of the necessity for adopting that decisive measure, for their own, and their country's preservation from absolute ruin. Had they vacated their seats, they foresaw clearly, that they might be occupied by successors, whose principles were directly opposed to their own. The consequences to be apprehended by them from such a result, were of a kind which could afford them no gratification. Mr. Paca therefore continued, notwithstanding all those mortifying considerations, to go on steadily in favoring, and promoting such a system of prepara-

tory measures, as he hoped would prepare the minds of his constituents for acquiescence in a declaration of absolute, and perpetual independence of the American colonies of the kingdom of Great Britain.

The contrast between the course he was pursuing in congress, and the declared views of the Maryland convention, at the same time, was very apparent. While they were declaring their loyal attachment to Great Britain, he was providing ways and means for furnishing an army, to be employed in resisting the orders of her government. While they were saying to the king and people of England that they were opposed to a separation, and would not be bound by an act sanctioned by a majority of congress dissolving the connection, he was engaged in planning a naval force, to contend under a national flag, which his instructions from them forbid to be hoisted; and so strenuous were they in their hostility to the contemplated independence, so late as the middle of May, 1776, that the convention repeated their prohibition to their delegates, by new instructions issued at that date. Congress at the same time, with the cordial approbation of the delegates from Maryland, were declaring that the royal authority, in the American colonies was at an end, and recommending to them severally, to organize governments for their own independent legislation, founded on the authority of the people. It appeared perfectly obvious, that such a conflicting state of views between Maryland and congress, could not long continue. A change must soon take place. Either congress must recede, or Maryland acquiesce. It did not escape the discernment of her delegates, that Maryland could not assume and maintain a neutral position in the centre of the field of hostilities. It was not believed that she would join the British, and compound for the consequences; and it was well understood that congress had proceeded too far, with the expressed approbation of almost the entire country, (with the exception of Maryland,) to recede from its purpose. It was therefore believed, that the statesmen of that province would soon feel the importance of concurring in the measure, and unite in declaring the American nation free and independent.

To effect this desirable object, several of her ardent and influential patriots made great exertions, and with such effect, that on the twenty-eighth of May, only thirteen days after they issued their last opposing instructions to their delegates in congress, the convention dispensed with praying for the *king and royal family*. The first step was now taken to-

wards a union with the other states; and the succeeding ones were less difficult to be effected. They had "faced about," and the forward march to their station in the combined array was become comparatively easy.

On the twenty-eighth day of June, the convention recalled their instructions, took off the restrictions from their delegates, and gave them permission to vote on the great question, then before congress, according to their own views of expediency. The record of their names to the engrossed parchment, which contains the declaration, "that America is, and of right ought to be, a free and independent nation," evinces their views of expediency on that subject.

So entire was the revolution in the feelings and views of the people of Maryland, in that short period, that on the very day when Mr. Paca and his colleagues assented to the Declaration of Independence in their behalf, they re-elected him to his seat in congress; and in a few weeks passed a resolve, approving of the measure they had so lately and so strenuously opposed. They re-elected him on the fifteenth of November of the same year, (1776,) and again on the fifteenth of February, 1777. By a similar act, they gave a decisive manifestation of their undiminished and continued confidence.

Early in the year 1778, they gave him a new pledge of their esteem, by appointing him chief judge of the supreme court of the state. Having faithfully served his state in performing the duties of that office, until 1782, they called him to lay aside the ermine, and accept the office of chief magistrate of their commonwealth. He sustained the office of governor, however, but one year, and then retired to the quiet repose of private life.

When a convention was called in Maryland, to decide on accepting the federal constitution, he was a member. And when the new government went into operation, and the several offices created by congress, under its auspices, were to be filled, General Washington nominated him judge of the district court, for the district of Maryland. This office he retained until his decease. This event occurred in the sixtieth year of his age. He left the world with the regrets of his numerous friends, and carried with him an irreproachable character to the grave.

## THOMAS STONE.

Of this gentleman little is recorded in the memorials of his public life, and owing to circumstances, somewhat peculiar in the changes which have taken place since his decease, about forty years ago, among his connections and acquaintances, by death and removals, but little has been remembered of his character and pursuits. Of necessity, therefore, the sketch of his history must be short. But the fact, that he was one of those bold and daring patriots, who advocated and signed the declaration of his country's independence, is sufficient to transmit his name on the records of American history, with perpetual approbation.

Thomas Stone was born at the Pointon Manor, in Maryland, in the year 1743; and educated to the profession of law; and he commenced the practice of it with a good reputation for talents, and with flattering prospects of success and prosperity.

By all the evidence which could be collected from his few remaining cotemporaries, who were at all acquainted with his character, and the incidents of his short life; it is apparent that he was a modest unambitious man, fond of domestic retirement, and satisfied with attending to the necessary duties of his profession. And when he stepped forth from private life to take a part in the great and difficult questions relative to his country's welfare, in the continental congress, that he did it more in compliance with the call of his fellow citizens, than to gratify any ambitious feelings, or from any desire to exhibit his talents on the great theatre which then drew the attention, not only of the American colonies and Great Britain, but of the other nations of Europe. For so soon as the great business was accomplished for the promotion of which he entered congress, he withdrew again to his private pursuits, and declined a reappointment to a seat in that assembly. He was however called at a subsequent date, again to render his services to the public in that national council.

At that eventful period, when the proceedings of the British parliament excited the fears of the colonies, and caused serious apprehension of danger to their constitutional rights and liberties, Mr. Stone was too young to take an active part in the public discussions which were held, as well in Mary-

and as in the other provinces. The interest and anxiety which the several enactments of parliament, laying an impost on articles consumed in the colonies produced, was common to every class, and all ages in society. Youths, listening to the remarks of their seniors, imbibed their sentiments, and partook of their feelings. Mr. Stone attended those places where the character of the "Stamp act" and other obnoxious statutes of parliament was discussed; and hearing their oppressive character described, their unconstitutionality demonstrated, and their tendency to the destruction of the privileges of the colonists depicted, in the glowing colors of impassioned eloquence, and the high-wrought feelings of indignation, which had pervaded the country; he caught their spirit, and early imbibed their opinions; which were confirmed as he increased in years, and became the established principles of his life. Although his principles were established in early life, they savored too strongly of determined resistance to British supremacy, to suit the cold prudence and vacillating policy of a majority of the citizens of Maryland. He was several years in advance of a great portion of his fellow citizens, in his patriotic feelings and sentiments. A knowledge of these spread among them, probably was the principal cause of his not being earlier brought into public life. But the causes which operated to keep him back for a time, shortly furnished the motives for calling him forth from private life, and putting him forward as a fit representative of men, then in power, whose sentiments and feelings fully corresponded with his own.

In the latter part of the year 1775, he was elected a delegate to the second congress, whose duty it became to make provision for the defence of the country against an invasion, and to prepare for sustaining a war with Great Britain, which they saw was inevitable; and which must be sustained, or the people must seal the death warrant of all their constitutional liberties and privileges.

The reluctance on the part of Maryland, to renounce all filial connection with Great Britain, was manifested in the instructions which their legislative council gave to their delegates in congress, even after independence had been declared. The following clause is found in those issued by the Maryland convention to their delegates in congress, after they had voted for and signed the Declaration of American Independence, in conformity to instructions previously issued by them.

'And the said delegates, or any three or more of them, are

hereby authorized and empowered, notwithstanding any measures heretofore taken, to concur with the congress, or a majority of them, in accommodating our unhappy differences with Great Britain, on such terms as congress, or a majority of them shall think proper."

This official extract, while it shows the fond affection which a majority of the leading politicians of Maryland still retained for the mother country, serves also to show the difficulties and embarrassments which her delegates in congress had to encounter and overcome, in proceeding to discharge their duty with a good conscience, according to their own views of sound wisdom, and true patriotism. All these embarrassments Mr. Stone and his colleagues had to meet and remove.

The feelings of the people of that colony were, however, somewhat shaken by the example of Virginia on one side, and Pennsylvania on the other; and in June, 1776, she was constrained to recall the instructions which she had given, and reiterated to her delegates in congress, by which they were emphatically prohibited from favoring any and every measure congress might agitate, tending to widen the breach already existing between the colonies and the parent government; and more especially enjoined them to oppose any proposition for declaring the colonies independent. Accordingly new instructions were issued, while the subject was under discussion by congress, on the resolution introduced for that purpose, by Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, which gave the delegates from Maryland full permission to act according to the sentiments they had long entertained in favor of it.

On the day on which the vote of the Maryland delegates was recorded in favor of independence, they were re-elected by the same convention that had so long held back, and ultimately consented to the measure, with manifest feelings of regret.

Mr. Stone does not appear, by the journals of congress, to have been a very prominent member; yet he was a laborious and useful one. He acted his part with fidelity and industry on various committees of congress; and particularly, he was the only member of the committee for arranging and reporting articles for a confederated government from that state. This committee consisted of one delegate from each state in the union; and the duty they had to perform was among the most difficult and arduous that was ever brought before the *old continental congress*. So many opposing views, clashing

interests, and corresponding feelings of partiality, the delegates from the different sections of the country were so tenacious of protecting their own local interests, with so little sympathy and regard for those of others, that it was extremely difficult to form any system of government, extending the power of congress over the united colonies, adequate to the indispensable necessities of that body, for prosecuting the war to a successful result. Indeed it was almost a hopeless effort, even at the commencement; and nothing but the universal conviction that congress could not proceed without such an union, would, in all probability, have been able to effect it. In the existing circumstances, it was brought forward, and repeatedly discussed and reconsidered, until after a lapse of several months, on the fifteenth day of November, 1777, it was finally agreed to.

Mr. Stone was again elected a member of congress in 1777. Having seen the confederation, which had so long occupied him and his colleagues, finally accepted by congress, at the close of the period of service for which he was last chosen, he retired from the national legislature, declined a re-election, and having been chosen a member of the state legislature, warmly advocated the adoption, by that body, of the confederation. It met a powerful opposition in the legislative council of Maryland, in which they persisted until 1781, notwithstanding the eloquent and urgent appeal of congress in their circular to the several state legislatures, pressing on them, in the most forcible manner, the necessity of its receiving their immediate acceptance.

Although it appears to have been his intention to withdraw wholly from congress, at the time he declined being a candidate for re-election, yet he was persuaded to represent that state once more under the confederation. His last election to that assembly was in 1783. He was present to witness that interesting, eventful, and solemn scene, the resignation, by General Washington, of his commission to congress, after having achieved the great object for which he received it.

In the latter part of the year 1784, he was president of congress *pro tempore*; and, according to usage, had he not declined a re-election, he would, in all probability, have been preferred to the same office the following year. But his native modesty appears to have kept him from aspiring after official distinction. He seems to have had no other ambition in his public life, than to perform his duty to his constituents



and the community with fidelity; and to merit and receive their approbation.

The remainder of his short life he spent in the active duties of his profession, at Port Tobacco, the place of his residence. He seems to have retained his popularity with his fellow citizens; as in 1787, they proposed him for a member of that ever memorable convention which met in Philadelphia, to form the new constitution. But he declined the appointment, and never again appeared on the stage of public action, for in the autumn of 1787, he closed his short, but useful life, at forty-two years of age.



#### CHARLES CARROLL OF CARROLLTON.

THIS gentleman, at the present time very highly distinguished throughout the American republic, on many accounts, and not the least, as being the only surviving signer of the Declaration of American Independence, is descended from Irish ancestry. His grandfather, Daniel Carroll, a native of Littamourna, in Ireland, was a clerk in England, in the office of Lord Powis, in the reign of James the second; but he left England, and emigrated to America in the latter part of the seventeenth century. He came to Maryland, under the patronage of Lord Baltimore, the principal patentee or proprietor of that colony, and was appointed as his agent, to receive his rents, and also as judge and register of the land office.

Charles Carroll, the son of Daniel, and the father of Charles, of Carrollton, was born in 1702; and after spending a long and active life, he died at the age of eighty years. His son Charles, the subject of this notice, now universally called Charles Carroll of Carrollton, was born on the twentieth of September, at Annapolis, Maryland, in the year 1737. His father took him when only eight years old to France, and placed him in an English Jesuits' college at St. Omer's, to be educated. After remaining there six years, he went to Rheims, to a college of French Jesuits, to pursue his studies in that seminary. There he continued but one year, and then was removed to the college of Louis Le Grand. Here he remained two years, and then went to Bourges to study

law; and at the termination of a year's residence there, he removed to Paris. Here he continued till 1757; and then left France, and went to London, to study law in England. For this purpose he took apartments in the Inner Temple. From England he returned to the place of his nativity in 1765, just about the time when the British ministry began to promulgate their system of measures, which eventually led to the independence of the American colonies.

Soon after opposition began to be manifested to those measures, Mr. Carroll became associated with the persons who were afterwards his colleagues in congress, in openly opposing the claims which were advanced by the ministry, and advocated by their partizans in Maryland. Messrs. Chase, Paca, Stone, Dulany, and Carroll, united in principle and spirit, through the press successfully contended with, and ultimately triumphed over their partizan adversaries, by the force of sound arguments, which they wielded with such dexterity, that the latter retired from the field, and left them in its possession.

Mr. Carroll was eminently distinguished as an able and successful political writer in 1771-2, when an attempt was made to establish the fees of office by the governor's proclamation. This measure was in perfect accordance with the system which had been adopted in England, without regard to the constitution of the kingdom, or the rights of the colonists, as members of the British nation. The attempt met with decided opposition at the threshold. Mr. Carroll took up the pen in hostility to it; and the provincial secretary appeared as his antagonist. Mr. Carroll triumphed. Thus the great question on which was soon after suspended the American revolution, "the right to tax a free people without their consent," was argued and settled in Maryland, and decided in favor of the colonial doctrine. Mr. Carroll had written and published, under the signature of "The First Citizen;" and his essays were so convincing to the people, that, on the day of the election of their representatives to the legislative assembly, they instructed their members, "to return their hearty thanks to the First Citizen," which was done officially by William Paca and Matthew Hammond, through the medium of the newspapers, that being their only channel of communication with an unknown writer. With that testimonial of their approbation, so strong was the public feeling of obligation to the writer, that as soon as it became known that Mr. Carroll was the writer of "The First Citizen," great numbers of people went in a body, and personally returned him

their thanks for the services he had rendered them, in defending their rights against the exercise of illegal power.

Mr. Carroll was now elevated to the summit of popular favor, and became at once possessed of the full confidence of the friends of the people's rights, throughout the province of Maryland. He appeared as a leader of the opposition to the ministerial claims of parliamentary prerogative, and all their corresponding measures in 1773-4-5; and in all his proceedings, he manifested an undaunted spirit and unwearied activity. Mr. Carroll, at a very early day declared to Mr. Chase, that the enemy, although silenced by argument, would not be put down without a resort to arms. Clearly foreseeing that result, he prepared to meet the approaching conflict.

The bold and decided sentiments he so frankly expressed on all occasions, had rendered him the most popular leader in the province; and his advice and counsel were sought by the people with great avidity, on all occasions in which they felt a strong interest. One instance, which will show the extensive influence he exercised over his fellow citizens, is worthy to be mentioned. A Mr. Stewart had imported a quantity of tea into Annapolis, which was contrary to a resolution of the delegates of Maryland, passed in June, 1774. It was at a time when the provincial court was in session, and the people, in a considerable number, were collected from the adjacent counties to attend it. This fact being made known, they became quite exasperated; and threatened violence to the consignees and master of the vessel, and destruction to the cargo. A committee of the delegates immediately convened; and to prevent disorderly proceedings, if practicable, they appointed a sub-committee to superintend the unloading of the vessel, and see to it that the tea was not landed. This step, however, did not satisfy the multitude. Mr. Stewart's friends applied to Mr. Carroll to interpose his influence with the populace, to prevail with them to suffer the unloading to proceed, under such a pledge, that the tea should not be landed. But it would not avail. Mr. Carroll perceived the strength of feeling which was excited by reason of the importation, and told those friends, that however highly he might personally esteem Mr. Stewart, and whatever might be his wish to prevent the people from resorting to violent measures, it would be impossible for him to protect Mr. Stewart, unless he would consent to abandon his vessel, and let it and the cargo both be committed to the flames. To that course Mr. Carroll advised; and after a momentary pause, i

was assented to, and immediately carried into execution, with the consent of Mr. Stewart the owner.

It will be recollected, that at the commencement of the revolutionary troubles, many committees of observation, of vigilance, of safety, of correspondence, &c. were instituted in the several provinces; all of which were charged with duties of high responsibility. In 1775, Mr. Carroll was appointed a member of the first committee of observation that was established in Annapolis; and in the same year, he was chosen a delegate from Anne-Arundel county, in the provincial convention.

The intense interest he felt in the proceedings of congress, induced him in the early part of 1776, to visit Philadelphia as a spectator of their deliberations, and to learn their proposed measures. His character, his sentiments, and the measures he had pursued in Maryland, were well known and justly estimated by congress; and although he was not one of their body, congress joined him with Doctor Franklin, and his own friend and fellow laborer, Samuel Chase, in an important mission to Canada. The object of that unsuccessful mission has been before mentioned.

He returned from that mission to Philadelphia, after Mr. Lee had introduced before congress his resolution for declaring independence, and when the important subject was under discussion. Feeling the vast importance of having that resolution adopted by the unanimous vote of the colonies, and knowing the shackles which were put on the Maryland delegates, by the prohibitory instructions from the convention of Maryland, which still remained in force, Mr. Carroll returned to his native province, to exert himself for procuring their removal. This object being accomplished, and new instructions having been issued, according to his wishes, he was immediately appointed a delegate to the congress, then deliberating on the great question. With these instructions in his possession, he reached Philadelphia on the eighth day of the memorable July, in which the birth of American independence took place; and had the consummate pleasure of giving to it his sanction and his signature.

Mr. Carroll was among the earliest in setting his name to the instrument, after it was prepared. On the eighteenth day of July, only ten days after he took his seat in congress, he was appointed a member of the "board of war;" which office he held during his continuance in congress.

Although the convention of Maryland had appointed him a

delegate to congress, and he was an acting member of that body, Mr. Carroll still retained his seat in that convention, and all the time he could be spared from the former, he devoted to the business of the latter, by his personal attendance. In this year he was elected a member of the convention for framing a constitution of government for the newly formed independent state of Maryland; and after it was adopted, he was in the same year, chosen a member of the state senate. Thus the honors of the state were bestowed on him bounteously by a grateful people, who now began to realize the magnitude of the services he had rendered them.

Early in 1777, he was re-appointed to a seat in the congress, where his services had been so truly patriotic and beneficial; and he continued to hold his seat until 1778, when he relinquished it. He was again chosen to the senate of Maryland in 1781; and after the federal government was established by an adoption of the new constitution of the United States, in 1788, in the month of December he was appointed a member of the first United States senate, for the state of Maryland.

At the balloting for classing the senators, which took place at the first session of the first congress, Mr. Carroll fell into the first class; and his term of service closed at the end of the first two years. In May, 1791, he was chosen into the senate of Maryland. Of this body he continued a member, until 1801, at which time he was left out by a revolution of the parties in the state. Thus terminated his political life. From that period he has spent his time in the happy circle of his family, in domestic tranquillity, and in the interchange of kind offices among his fellow citizens; for whose benefit, and for that of posterity, he had devoted so many years of his life. In 1801, when he retired from public employment, he was in the sixty-third year of his age. He is the last surviving patriot who set his name to the Declaration of American Independence. He is now the patriarch of the United States.

He is at this time the only connecting link of the political chain which unites the past with the future, in the United States. He is justly venerated, and respected by the existing generation, and he will be honored and revered by all succeeding generations.

## VIRGINIA.



## GEORGE WYTHE.

GEORGE WYTHE was a native of Virginia. He was born in 1726, in the county of Elizabeth. On the decease of his father, who was a wealthy farmer, he came into possession of an ample estate, sufficient to render him independent.

His mother was a woman of superior intellect and acquirements, and she took much pains to have him well instructed. All the education he derived from schools, amounted only to reading and writing his native language, with but a slight acquaintance with the rules of common arithmetic. But his mother, who was well instructed in the Latin language, took on herself the instruction of her son, and aided him much in acquiring a knowledge of both the Latin and Greek. He lost both of his parents by death, before he had reached twenty-one years of age, and was left to his own guidance, in possession of pecuniary means sufficient for indulging all his desires for worldly pleasure and amusement, which unrestrained youth are too prone to pursue. After the decease of his mother, he gave way to the seductions of pleasure, laid aside study, and devoted several years to amusement and dissipation.

In the course of a few years, however, he seems to have come to sober reflection, for at about the age of thirty, he withdrew himself from his gay associates, relinquished his levities, and returned to his studies with a zeal and application, which prepared him for the distinguished honor and usefulness to which he afterwards obtained. This assiduous application he continued to the end of his life. He did not cease to lament the misimprovement of his early years, even in his old age, and he always viewed the time he spent in pleasure, not only as a heavy, but an irreparable loss.

Having by his own efforts acquired a preparatory education, superior to that of many who enjoy better advantages than he did, he commenced the study of law, under the instruction of Mr. John Jones, a distinguished lawyer in the colony. Soon after his admission to the bar, he rose rapidly to

the head of the profession in the county where he resided. In his practice, Mr. Wythe uniformly observed a course of conduct worthy of universal imitation. He would never knowingly engage in an unjust or unrighteous cause. His integrity, and his strict attention to business were such, as inspired the community with the fullest confidence in his character, and he rose rapidly in his profession. He was highly distinguished for his learning, and for the purity and correctness of his conduct in his profession; and when on the recommendation of congress, Virginia organized a government for herself, Mr. Wythe was appointed chancellor of the state, which was the first judicial office in the gift of the state. That office he held, and the duties of it he discharged, with strict justice and impartiality to the end of his life.

He was called early by his fellow citizens, to a seat in the house of burgesses; in which he continued by periodical re-elections till near the commencement of the American revolution. In the legislative hall he was associated with some of the first men and most ardent patriots of Virginia. It will be sufficient to name Messrs. Lee, Harrison, Peyton Randolph, Pendleton, Bland, and Henry. He was of a kindred spirit in politics with them; and he enjoyed, as he fully deserved, their confidence and esteem.

That system of oppressive measures, which the British ministry intended to pursue relative to the American colonies, of which the "Stamp act" was the leader, found a decided and resolute opposer in George Wythe, in connection with his no less resolute and decided associate fellow patriots in Virginia. With them he continued a steadfast and uniform opposition in the legislature of Virginia, to the encroachments of the British parliament on the rights and liberty of the American colonists, until their perseverance brought forth the great crisis, when the people of the provinces, finding their oppression no longer to be endured, began to resort to arms in their own defence. At that memorable juncture, Mr Wythe joined a volunteer corps, and girded on his armor, prepared to meet in the field the hostile invaders of his country.

In 1775 he was remanded to the duties of legislation, by his confiding countrymen, and was appointed a delegate to the general congress; of which he continued a member in the year following, when the great question of declaring the American colonies free and independent of the government of Great Britain, was introduced, and decided in the affirmative. This object, which had been contemplated by him, received his

cordial support ; and he set his signature to it with much satisfaction.

After Virginia had formed a government for herself, it became necessary to adapt her code of laws to the new political condition in which she was now placed, as an independent state. A revision of the laws became necessary ; and for this important purpose a committee was appointed ; one of which was Mr. Wythe. His acting colleagues were Jefferson and Pendleton.

At that time, when the country demanded the active employment of all the best talents it contained, Mr. Wythe was kept constantly employed in some public business of importance. In 1777, he was chosen speaker of the house of burgesses ; and the same year, he was elevated to a high judiciary station, one of the three judges of the high court of chancery. And when that court was organized anew, he was constituted sole judge. In that character he occupied the bench more than twenty years, with the full approbation of the community. While in that station he was called to give the first decision on the great question, whether debts contracted by persons in the United States, to men in Great Britain, previously to the revolution, were recoverable at law. Popular feeling was strong against it ; and the excitement was extensive in America. But Chancellor Wythe, acting with uprightness, having, after a thorough investigation, satisfied his mind that they were recoverable, decided the question, with an independence which is highly creditable to his firmness and integrity.

In addition to his judicial office, he held for a season the office of professor of law in the college of William and Mary ; but on his removal to Richmond, he resigned it, finding it incompatible with his other duties.

In 1786, he was chosen a delegate to the convention for forming the new constitution of the United States. In 1788, he was chosen a member of the state convention, assembled to consider the question of adopting or rejecting that constitution. After its adoption, and the government had gone into operation, he was twice chosen an elector of a president of the United States.

His was the singular honor of having been the law instructor of two presidents and one chief justice of the United States.

Notwithstanding all his public occupations, he instituted a private school, which he instructed personally, free for those who attended it ; as he demanded no compensation for



## GEORGE WYTHE,

his services. He took also a favorite young negro boy, and instructed him to some extent in the Latin and Greek languages, intending to give him a literary education; but he died a short time before his benefactor.

Mr. Wythe, like several of his fellow laborers in the cause of his country, and of civil liberty, rose from obscurity to high literary, political, and professional eminence, by his own resolute and persevering exertions, with but little collateral assistance. He resolved to rise to distinction; and he accomplished his purpose. And this he effected by adopting and pursuing, with untiring perseverance, a course of application to study of integrity, and impartiality in business, of virtuous moral deportment among men, and an undeviating and inflexible adherence to what he believed was right.

His death occurred on the 8th day of June, 1806, and was undoubtedly occasioned by poison, administered by some person in a portion of his food. Suspicion fell strongly on a person nearly related to him; but he was acquitted by a jury. He was in his eighty-first year when this melancholy event took place.

During his life he gave freedom to his slaves, and furnished them with the necessary means of support until they could provide for themselves; and in his will, he made provision for the support of a man, woman, and child, whom he had manumitted during their lives. The boy fell a victim to the same poisoned food which caused his master's decease, and died a short time before him.

Mr. Wythe was twice married. His first wife was a daughter of his preceptor, Mr. Jones. He had but one child, who died young. He left no offspring to survive him.

The character of Mr. Wythe was, and still is, much venerated; and his violent death justly lamented by his surviving friends and fellow citizens, to whom he had been a public benefactor.



## RICHARD HENRY LEE.

If a lineal descent from ancestors, who through successive generations were distinguished by rank and office, both honorable and lucrative, can confer gratification to the feelings of a republican, no man can justly claim more, than Richard

Henry Lee was entitled to assume. The family from which he was descended was highly distinguished, in that respect, even among those which claimed distinction in Virginia, the place of his birth. But he seems not to have partaken of the feeling of superiority so common among men. He was *truly* a republican.

Richard Henry Lee was born in the county of Westmoreland, in the colony of Virginia, on the twentieth day of January, 1732.

When he had reached a suitable age, according to the prevailing fashion at that period of the colonial history, among gentlemen of affluence in the southern colonies, his father sent him to England to obtain his education. He placed him at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, at a flourishing school, in which he could have all the advantages to be derived from the refined society of the town, combined with the simple manners and economical habits of the country. The leading object which he seems to have contemplated in acquiring his education, was to possess himself of those branches of elegant literature and useful science, which comprise the education of a gentleman, who had no particular profession in view.

History, especially that of ancient republics, engaged much of his attention. By an acquaintance with it, he became attached to civil liberty in his youth; an attachment which increased, as he advanced in years and in maturity of understanding and judgment, even to the end of his life.

He left his school in England, and returned to Virginia, before he had completed his nineteenth year. There he applied himself assiduously to literary pursuits, the results of which are still in being. They are contained in manuscripts of considerable size, in which he systematized his views of ethics, and the philosophy of history, which he gathered from reading, or were suggested by his own reflections.

The first that we hear of him in public employment, was at the time when General Braddock arrived from England, and summoned the governors of the colonies to assemble in Alexandria, in Virginia, to confer on what means should be adopted and applied for the public safety, at that time threatened by the French and Indians, particularly on the western frontier settlements. Mr. Lee was then at the head of the troops of the county of Westmoreland; and those he led to Alexandria, and tendered his services to General Braddock, together with those gallant volunteers who comprised the band which he commanded, for the service of his coun-

try. But as that proud officer could not conceive that the aid of the provincials was necessary, for such a disciplined force as he had brought with him from England, Mr. Lee with his troops returned to his home; while Braddock paid the price of his presumption, by the loss of his own life and the destruction of his army.

Before Mr. Lee had reached the age of twenty-five years, he had established such a character for integrity, knowledge, and influence, in the community where he resided, that numbers on their dying beds, or when contemplating their approach to the close of life, in their solicitude for the welfare of their surviving children, selected him for their guardian and protector.

When he was but twenty-five years old, in concurrence with the wishes of the people, he was appointed a justice of the peace for the county, by the royal governor; and in the same year, he was chosen a member of the house of burgesses. At that early age, the other magistrates united in a petition to the governor, that Mr. Lee's commission might be so dated, as to obviate some existing impediment to his being chosen president of the court, which could not be legally done without such a measure. This fact serves to show the confidence they entertained in his fitness for the station, at that early period of life.

Diffidence prevented him from appearing in public debate for a considerable time, and kept him from displaying his powers of oratory, which at an after period he exercised with such power and effect, both in that house and in congress, as gained for him the appellation of the Cicero of America. But happily he was excited to shake off that diffidence, and come forward with all his native force, and an elegance of manner, for which he was afterwards so highly distinguished. The first debate in which he took an active part, was on the limitation of slavery. The immediate object of the resolution proposed, and which engaged all his heart and exertions in its behalf, was "to lay so heavy a duty on the importation of slaves, as effectually to stop that disgraceful traffic."

On this subject he addressed the speaker in a speech, which astonished the audience, and gave an earnest of the eloquence in debate, which afterwards attended him through his public life.

There was another occasion which called him forth in the same body, in which he evinced his integrity and fearless

ness in performing his duty for the public benefit, against a formidable opposition, before which others had shrunk, the odds being fearfully against them at the outset. The opposition consisted of men of dissolute morals, who had dissipated their estates, yet affecting the show of wealth, haughtily looked down on what they termed "the lower classes of society," and asserted that the mass of the people were incompetent to manage their own concerns; and the right of governing was limited to but a few, who possessed the requisite qualities for performing the duty. Their income did not meet their expenses, which were incurred by an extravagant style of living, which they could not afford. They had too much pride to conform to their circumstances; and to supply the deficiency, resorted to borrowing. In the house of burgesses, they on all occasions voted with the administration. Many of these had borrowed large sums of Mr. Robinson, the colonial treasurer. He was of a very obliging and accommodating disposition, a gentleman in his manners; and was also the leader of the aristocratic party in Virginia. He lent to them until his private funds were exhausted; and he unfortunately loaned to them redeemed treasury bills, which his duty enjoined, and fidelity required him to destroy, to secure the public against a loss.

The treasurer felt that he was strongly fortified against the consequences of an investigation, by the members whom he had accommodated, who were pledged to defend him should he be prosecuted. He felt secure of a majority who would sustain him by their vote; and if he should be arraigned, and not convicted, whoever undertook the labor, would become an object of public odium, and must sink under the burthen which would be cast upon him. Hence, no one was found adventurous enough to encounter the opposition he must meet, but Richard Henry Lee, though all were convinced of its necessity. But he, regardless of the consequences to himself, with a moral courage worthy of his character, entered on the prosecution of the delinquent treasurer; nor did he desist from the pursuit, until he had finished the business, which his public duty required at his hands. The magnanimity, decision, and address, which he manifested on that occasion, and the success which crowned his efforts, notwithstanding the formidable opposition he had to encounter, placed him on a high and commanding eminence in the republican party, and acquired for him the gratitude of the community whom he had saved from suffering a severe loss.

It is needless to recapitulate in this place, the causes which led to, and terminated in the separation of the British colonies from their parent government. It has been often done, in this series of memoirs, and they operated in a similar manner on the minds of the leading patriots, at nearly the same moment, in every part of the country. Mr. Lee was among the foremost in observing them, in detecting their consequences, if they were not successfully opposed, and in sounding the alarm among his countrymen.

He organized the first association which existed in Virginia, for opposing British oppression in that colony. It was in direct hostility to an execution of the duties enjoined by the celebrated "Stamp act." There was at that time an open and avowed party in Virginia, of great power and influence. It was odious to his feelings; and he determined to commence an attack upon it, with a view to its ultimate prostration, and thus do away the distinction that was continually maintained between the wealthy inhabitants and the common people. To some extent he accomplished his purpose. He had united with him, in spirit and in purpose, the celebrated Patrick Henry. They were unlike in their manner, but for mutual aids, none perhaps were ever better associated. They may, in one point of view, be happily compared to Luther and Melancthon. Mr. Henry's eloquence had the majesty and overwhelming force of a storm, which shook every thing within its sweep. His opponents trembled when he rose, and feared that the first flash of his fire would strike them prostrate. Mr. Lee met them without any threatening aspect while his sweet sounding eloquence fell on them like a gentle shower, and animated their feelings, and revived their desponding spirits, till a new aspect was given to all who heard him. They were not only formidable, but irresistible, when they united in an attack upon their opponents.

Richard Henry Lee, was the first man in Virginia, who stepped forward in open opposition to an execution of the "Stamp act." The patricians generally were strongly predisposed to support the authority and measures of the British ministry, towards the American colonies. Mr. Lee for a time stood almost single handed, in opposing them. And those who favored the cause generally, by reason of constitutional timidity, or some other cause, hesitated about the measures to be adopted, and fell far behind him in spirit and firmness. But nothing daunted by the opposing force, he persevered until he broke their ranks, and scattered their forces.

The merit of having first proposed "committees of correspondence," which had such a powerful and favorable influence in preparing the people to resist the British, and finally for the revolutionary conflict—Virginia or Massachusetts, has been claimed both for the convention of Massachusetts, and that of Virginia; and the fact appears to be, that both bodies conceived the project about the same time. But letters, now in being, show that the proposal had been made by Mr. Lee to gentlemen both north and south of Virginia, several years before any measure of the kind had been suggested by any other man in the country. The proposals for the measure, in the legislative bodies in those two colonies, were as late as 1773, whereas the letter of Mr. Lee to Mr. Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, is dated the twenty-fifth of July, 1768.

The situation of Mr. Lee was singularly favorable for obtaining early information of what was doing in England, which peculiarly interested the colonies; and this is, probably, one reason why he became one of the most forward of the leaders in that early period. His brother, Doctor Arthur Lee, who was a distinguished literary character, was at that time in Great Britain, and spent much of his time in London. He associated with a number of eminent civilians and statesmen, and with several of both classes, of those who were friendly to the American colonies, on terms of intimacy. He kept up a constant correspondence with his brother, in which he furnished him with the earliest political intelligence of parliamentary projects and proceedings, relating to the colonies, that he could obtain. Mr. Lee had watched their progress with a cautious vigilance, partaking in some degree of jealousy, from the time of his return from his school. His suspicion, which was awakened in his youth, was continually on the alert to detect the designs of the ministry upon his native land; always anticipating such a design, when their measures assumed the most plausible and conciliating aspect. Hence, when the law repealing the "Stamp act" arrived, and furnished such universal congratulation throughout the colonies, the pleasure he derived from that source, was diminished by the clause which accompanied it, declaring the *right* of parliament to bind the colonies. His knowledge of the British constitution was too clear and correct, to suffer him to assent to that principle; and his love of his native country, and his attachment to civil liberty and the principles of republicanism, too ardent and unbending, to admit of his assenting to such a claim, by parliament, or any

other power, in which his country was not duly represented. Doctor Lee being on the ground, and associating with leading men of all parties, in parliament and out of it, was furnished with the best means for obtaining information; and his love of freedom, and of his own country, induced him to watch the course of the British cabinet, that he might be able to communicate early and correct information to his brother, of what might be expected, for the benefit of his countrymen. The correctness of his opinions may be estimated by those communications. The facts and opinions thus conveyed to Richard Henry Lee, left no room for doubt on his mind, as to the proper course to be pursued by the colonies, if they did not intend to submit to a state of bondage to Great Britain, and patiently wear the chains which the English cabinet was forging to secure their obedience. He, therefore, feeling determined on resistance himself, at all hazards, was abundant in labors and efforts, to enlighten his countrymen on their condition, and future prospects; and to prepare their minds, and rouse their patriotic love of liberty, to meet the shock, whenever the gathering storm might burst upon them. To effect this important object, he exerted himself in every way he could devise. As a member of the house of burgesses in Virginia, he brought the claim of parliament to bind the colonies before that body, in resolutions, in which he expressed his sentiments of opposition in strong and explicit terms, such as some denominated the ebullitions of sedition, and disloyal madness. He also corresponded with influential gentlemen in other colonies, published his sentiments in newspapers, and conversed with his fellow citizens, as opportunities presented. Thus it was, that while many were contemplating the independence of the colonies as a future and contingent event, and began cautiously to speak of it as possible, a few months only before the measure was irrevocably decided by congress, Richard Henry Lee had long had his mind prepared, and his judgment as freely decided, as at the time when he introduced the resolution for the consideration of congress in June, 1776.

He early saw the importance of adopting measures, to diminish the commercial intercourse with Great Britain, by abstaining from the use of every luxury and superfluity which had been customarily imported from thence by the colonial merchants, and by exertions to procure all the necessities of life from the productions of domestic labor. This system he began to practise himself, and urged upon the citizens

of his county, a considerable time before the party opposed to royalty in Virginia had become united, or resolute enough to meet in a private house, and recommend such a measure to their fellow citizens. With a view to convince the people of England that the American colonies could, and if urged to do it, would live independently of that nation, he had manufactured wine from the native grape of the country; specimens of which he sent in bottles, to several of his friends in Great Britain, "to testify his respect and gratitude for those who had shown a particular kindness to Americans." This wine, he assured them, was the produce of his own hills; and he gave orders to his merchant in London, who had furnished his supplies heretofore, not to send him any articles on which parliament had imposed a duty to be paid by Americans. This he did prior to any non-importation agreement in any part of the country; and probably, at a time when no other individual even thought of such a measure.

No proceeding of parliament, which had a bearing unfavorable to the liberties of his country, escaped his notice. No event took place in the colonies, of importance to their interests, of which he could avail himself for extending his correspondence, and impressing his own views and sentiments on the minds of others, which he did not improve. The burning of the British schooner *Gaspee*, in Narragansett Bay, about this period, was an event which he improved, for opening a correspondence with that influential and resolute patriot, Samuel Adams, of Boston. While others were speculating on the consequences of the occurrence, and looking with melancholy forebodings to what might result from the representations made by the court of inquiry, Mr. Lee sought for correct information of the facts relating to that bold and daring enterprise.

On hearing from his brother in London, of the "Boston port bill," Mr. Lee immediately drew up resolutions to offer to the consideration of the house of burgesses, which evinced a spirit of bold determination, that excited the resentment of the royal governor to such a degree, that he immediately dissolved the house, before he had an opportunity to offer them. This step of regal power produced good to the cause which Mr. Lee espoused, and contributed to strengthen his hands, by concentrating his friends, and awakening them to the necessity of united, resolute, and vigorous effort. Notwithstanding the dissolution of the house by the governor, the patriotic members assembled voluntarily, before whom he laid his reso-



lutions ; one of which recommended the calling a general congress. This, however, was too strong a measure for the feelings of a majority. They thought Mr. Lee rash, and precipitate ; and they chose to soften it down many degrees of temperature. Although they ultimately came to the ground where he then stood, yet he, and a few others who acted with him, were at that time, far in advance of the patriotism of Virginia. They adjourned to meet again at a future day. That day was the first of August, 1774. The controversy between the governor and his adherents on the one side, and the patriotic friends of the people on the other, was becoming more open and spirited. To prevent the meeting by adjournment of the delegates of the people, on the first of August, the governor issued his writs for a choice of representatives, to meet on the eleventh of the same month. But his plan did not succeed. At the call of the people, without consulting the pleasure of the governor, many of the most distinguished men in the colony came together on the day of adjournment, to compose the first assembly of the people of Virginia, that ever met on that authority alone. The die was now cast, and the cause which he had been so long contending for, was now won. The spirit of the people was roused, and their tardy time-serving representatives, who had been vacillating so long, were replaced by others of a less timid disposition, and whose spirit and fortitude were more in unison with those of their constituents.

At this meeting Mr. Lee introduced his favorite plan of choosing delegates to meet with those from other provinces, in a general congress, to consult on measures for the public good ; measures in which all the people were deeply, and vitally interested. Here success crowned his long and arduous efforts, to rouse and call forth the energy and spirit of Virginia, and prepare them to breast the storm he had long seen gathering, and which there was too much reason to apprehend would burst upon them, while they were slumbering in a careless security. The representatives of the people in that assembly did awake. The result was that Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, and George Washington, were elected to meet the delegates chosen by the other colonies, in a general congress in Philadelphia, on the fifth day of September of that year. When the day arrived, it found him and his colleagues on the floor, actuated by all that noble and elevated love of country and civil liberty, and impelled by all that zealous and

untiring patriotism, which shone forth with such lustre during their future lives.

The meeting of the first congress presented a scene, unprecedented in the annals of this or any other country. It was new, interesting, and solemn, beyond expression. The consequences which might result from it were momentous, to a degree which the human mind cannot easily comprehend. The responsibility was weighty enough to bear down the firmest and most resolute. The eyes of three millions of people were intently fixed on them. The consequences of their determinations would vitally affect posterity to the end of time; and an uncertainty as to each others views, pervaded the whole assembly.

The seals were successively broken, and the instructions of the several delegations disclosed. When the last seal was broken by Mr. Henry, a universal silence pervaded the house, anxiety was visible in every countenance, and a half suppressed quiver agitated every lip. At this moment Richard Henry Lee arose, and broke the portentous silence. He saw, as by intuition, that the feeling, and the crisis, were such as might be turned to good, or to evil, according as they might be improved at the instant. He addressed the assembly with a voice so melodious, a language so persuasive, and sentiments so enlarged and just, as soothed, though they did not suppress the emotions of the meeting; and when with the most pleasing and convincing eloquence, he declared that there was but one hope for the country, and that was in the vigor of her resistance. Every heart beat in unison with the sentiment, and was prepared to enter on the system which should render resistance effectual. Then was achieved a triumph, which began immediately to be felt through the American colonies.

In this congress, Mr. Lee was placed on all the most important committees, and associated with the most distinguished delegates from the other colonies. It cannot be necessary to mention them in detail. It was here that the extent and variety of his information, were manifested in his extensive influence and usefulness. His counsel and advice, were sought for by members of committees with which he was not connected, respecting their reports, more than those of any other member of the house. When the first congress adjourned in the twenty-sixth day of October, 1774, the part which Mr. Lee had acted in that body, during its session; the intelligence he had displayed; the spirit he had manifested; his ac-

tivity in business ; the straight forward course he pursued ; his devoted patriotism, strict honor, and unyielding fidelity ; his elegance of manners, and his persuasive eloquence ; left an impression on the public mind respecting his character, most honorable to his talents, and truly grateful to his feelings. It was an impression which any man might desire to make, but which few were able to secure.

Immediately on the return of the delegates from congress to their homes, Mr. Lee and Mr. Henry were elected to the legislature of Virginia. Mr. Lee had the unanimous vote of his fellow citizens of the county of Westmoreland. In that assembly their united influence had become paramount ; and almost any measure which they advocated, the members were almost prepared to carry by acclamation. Mr. Henry introduced a resolution for arming the militia of the colony. At first it met with opposition. But by the influence of their united eloquence, the assembly became impatient of delay, and the measure was adopted with eagerness ; and their three delegates to congress, with some others, were appointed a committee to carry it into effect.

Notwithstanding all the hostile events which had taken place on the part of Great Britain towards the colonies, there were not a few timid people, who still cherished a hope that a reconciliation with the mother country would be effected, and peace preserved. This undoubtedly, was thought desirable by a large proportion of the people, could it be accomplished on just and safe principles. Many had long since relinquished all hope respecting it ; and were firmly persuaded that the only alternative remaining for them to decide was resistance, or absolute submission. About the time when the second congress convened, all expectation of the restoration of harmony and continued peace, had departed from the most fastidious advocates for forbearance. Timidity, under the influence of a conviction that war was inevitable, now gave place to a determined spirit of resistance ; and vigorous preparations to meet the exigency were desired by all, except the adherents to the royal cause.

Mr. Lee and his former colleagues were delegated to the second congress, by which Washington was appointed commander in chief of the American armies ; and his commission and instructions were drawn up by Richard Henry Lee. He was appointed to provide munitions of war, to promote by judicious encouragement the manufacture of arms, and saltpetre, for the manufacture of gunpowder, of both which the

country was very destitute ; and to devise a plan for a rapid communication of intelligence with all parts of the country, indispensable in a time of war. In these important duties he was not alone ; but congress, discovering his superior fitness for the purpose availed itself of his distinguished talents and information, for maturing plans, and urging forward their execution, in connection with others ; and in performing the duties assigned him, his labors were as abundant, as they were important.

The second address of congress to the people of Great Britain, was from the pen of Mr. Lee ; and its beauty, force, and elegance, had its full share of influence in calling forth the well known eulogy of the great Earl of Chatham, which he pronounced in the British parliament, on the character of the American congress, displayed in their state papers. A eulogy honorable alike to the great man who pronounced, and the great men who were the subjects of it.

The royal governor of Virginia had summoned a general assembly of the burgesses of that colony, to consider of the conciliatory propositions of Lord North, by which he hoped to deceive, and divide the people of America. A recess in congress occurred just in season for Mr. Lee to be present, when they came up for discussion. He was amply prepared to expose their artful sophistry, and by tearing off the mask, to expose their insidiousness in all its deformity, to the clear apprehension of the people.

After the lapse of a short recess, which furnished Mr. Lee with no relaxation from his arduous duties, he returned to meet congress, which assembled again on the thirteenth of September, 1775. Here his time, talents, and attention were incessantly employed in all the most important measures which devolved on that assembly. The blood of Americans had been shed by the British soldiers at Lexington, in Massachusetts, and the cry for vengeance which was sounded aloud from the North and the East ; rolled forward in every direction, and was echoed and responded from the South and West, in terms which portended the desperate determination of the injured, to visit their invaders with a full measure of merited retribution.

Even the sluggish patriotism of Georgia, which Lyman Hall and a few others, had been trying in vain to arouse to serious alarm, by this intelligence was kindled, and it showed itself for the first time in the attitude of resistance, and eager for retaliation.

The time was fast approaching, when it would become not only expedient, but indispensable for congress to take a decided step, and boldly bid defiance to the enemy, in this unnatural conflict. Hitherto the nations of Europe, could only look on the struggling colonies with feelings of sympathy and commiseration. However well disposed they might be to assist them, they would be restrained from treating, and negotiating alliances with colonies in rebellion against their legitimate sovereign. To obviate these impediments in the way of obtaining foreign aid, it was absolutely necessary that congress should renounce the allegiance of the colonies to the unnatural parent, and declare themselves free. Thus stepping forth in the character of an independent nation, they might look to other nations for the aid which they so much needed in this time of their extremity.

The necessity for taking this decisive step, was perceived and felt, and widely extended through the country. The legislature of Virginia instructed their delegates in congress, to urge that body to adopt it without unnecessary delay. Congress felt fully impressed with its indispensable necessity; and Richard Henry Lee was designated to move the resolution. Fully aware of what might be the consequences to himself, if the issue of the contest proved unsuccessful to the colonies, relying on the justice of the cause he had espoused, and appealing to Him who is the great and righteous arbiter between nations, he put his life into his hand, and on the seventh day of June, 1776, introduced a resolution, declaring "*That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them, and the state of Great Britain, is, and ought to be totally dissolved.*"

On the day when this resolution was postponed till the first Monday in July, an express reached Philadelphia from Mr. Lee's family, announcing that the sickness of some of its members rendered his return to them necessary. He immediately obtained leave to retire from his congressional labors for a season, and returned to Virginia, to attend to the duties which the condition of his family demanded. This providential call from the theatre of his public service, furnishes the reason why the draught of the Declaration of Independence was not, according to the established usage at that time, from the pen of the original mover of the resolution. Mr. Lee was necessarily absent, and unable to prepare the document

Hence congress appointed a committee for the purpose, of which Mr. Jefferson was chairman. Thus it became his duty to present the original; which after some alterations, was approved by congress, and adopted on the fourth of July, 1776.

In consequence of Mr. Lee's great and persevering exertions to procure the independence of his country, and to promote an effectual resistance to the oppressions of the king and his ministers, he became peculiarly an object of their enmity; and great efforts were made to obtain possession of his person. In two instances he very narrowly escaped their grasp; in both of which he was in imminent danger of captivity. In one instance, his preservation was owing to the fidelity of his slaves; and in the other, to his own dexterity and presence of mind.

He resumed his seat in congress on the beginning of August, after an absence of several weeks, and having signed the Declaration of Independence, immediately entered upon his active and arduous duties in that assembly. These he continued stedfastly, and with his accustomed fidelity and talent to perform, until June, 1777. It is rational to believe, that exertions so numerous, sacrifices so great, and services so important, and long continued, and all consistent with his uniform declarations in behalf, and for the benefit of his country, might have secured him against the slanderous charge of toryism. But such was not the case; the accusation was founded upon the fact, that at a certain period he received his rents in produce, instead of the depreciated colonial money. Circumstances induced him to request an investigation of his conduct; the result of which was, as might have been anticipated, highly gratifying to his feelings. The house of assembly, after hearing the report of the investigating board, passed the following resolution; and directed their speaker, who was George Wythe, to communicate it to Mr. Lee, which he did in the presence of the senate and house of assembly, after having prefaced it with a short, but elegant complimentary address: "That the thanks of this house be given by the speaker, to Richard Henry Lee, Esq. for the faithful services he has rendered his country, in discharge of his duty, as one of the delegates from this state in general congress."

The assembly immediately appointed Mr. Lee to supply a vacancy in congress. Again he repaired to his station, and manifested his usual talent and devotion to his country's welfare. The multitude and variety of his labors, together

with his anxiety for the national welfare and prosperity preyed on his health, which was perceived to decline daily. Consequently, he was constrained, at intervals, to withdraw from burdens, which he found himself unable longer to sustain, without occasional relaxation. Thus he was absent from his seat several times, during the sessions of 1778 and 1779.

To ascertain and correctly estimate the real character of a possessed patriot, it may be well to examine his conduct on occasions, when local feelings and sinister interests, affecting himself and his immediate constituents, are to come into competition with those of the whole community, and may be expected to sway his decisions, in favor of those which most immediately affect himself and his friends. A case of this nature is presented in the congressional debates, respecting the instructions which should be given to our ministers, who might hereafter be required to negotiate the treaty of peace; and determine the conditions on which it should be settled. Respecting what should be required as an ultimatum, Mr. Lee generally recorded his vote in opposition to all his immediate colleagues, and many other southern delegates. He uniformly insisted on a right to the fisheries, and a free navigation of the Mississippi River; while his colleagues seem to have been willing, if their own peculiar interests were once secured, to relinquish, or at least not earnestly to contend for, these two great interests of the East and West. This fact may furnish a political thermometer, by which to measure comparatively the expansiveness and elevation of their respective views. No sectional feelings, nor narrow local interests, could sway his mind from the path of true patriotism, nor induce him to regard the interests of his own vicinity with any partiality or favor, which he would withhold from those of the most remote settlements in his country. His sentiments were of the most liberal and elevated character.

At the period when the enemy were turning their forces more immediately to the southern states, Mr. Lee's attention was directed to the defence of his native state. As lieutenant of the county of Westmoreland, the command of the militia of that county devolved on him; and he, by taking the field, and by a judicious application of the means committed to his direction for the defence of that region, saved the inhabitants from much suffering, and from the severe losses which they must otherwise have sustained.

He declined a seat in congress during the three last years

of the war of the revolution, believing that his services would be more important in his own state.

The time having arrived which saw the struggle of the American states for independence triumphant; and Mr. Lee having been gratified by seeing the leading principles for which he had uniformly contended, recognized in the treaty of peace; he again accepted an appointment to a seat in the general congress; and once more appeared in that body in November, 1784. By the unanimous choice of that assembly, he was appointed their president; the duties of which office he discharged with the talent, industry, faithfulness, and dignity, which had marked the whole course of his public life; and at length he closed his career by receiving "the thanks of congress for his able and faithful discharge of the duties of president, while acting in that station." It was an honorable testimony to his worth, as truly merited and as justly bestowed, as perhaps was ever done on any similar occasion.

He was not a member of the convention of Virginia to which the federal constitution was submitted, and by which it was finally adopted; but he was opposed to its adoption without amendments. In this respect, he was far from being singular. But his opposition was grounded on honest principles, and was open to conviction. He was too upright and conscientious a man to cavil for the sake of fault-finding, or for affecting to appear wiser than others. He had no other end in view in opposing its adoption, than the good of his country; and if he had believed he could not vindicate his opposition by reason and sound argument, he would have frankly relinquished it. These were the only weapons which he would use himself, or justify others in wielding, in the support of such a cause. Whether his views were or were not correct, his object was worthy, and his patriotism pure, elevated, and inflexible.

He was appointed the first senator of Virginia under the new constitution, and proposed several amendments to it, which, having been adopted, his fears and apprehensions of the dangers he had pointed out were allayed. He retained the office, until increasing age and infirmities admonished him to withdraw from public life, to the repose of domestic retirement, that he might participate in the endearments of the family circle, and abstracted from all other cares, but that of ripening and preparing for the close of a long and useful life.

In his retirement, he received another vote of thanks from



the senate of Virginia as an honorable testimonial of their views of his merit, couched in happy language, and sincerely expressive of their high estimation of the important services he had rendered to the country, and respect for his truly excellent character.

The following quotation from Sanderson's Biography, is too beautiful, and too just, not to merit an insertion in this history:—

“The preceding sketch may give some idea of the public services of Mr. Lee, but who can depict him in that sphere of which he was the centre? giving light and happiness to all around him; possessing all the enjoyment which springs from virtue, unblemished fame, blooming honors, ardent friendship, eloquence of taste, and a highly cultivated mind. His hospitable door was open to all; the poor and the distressed frequented it for relief and consolation; the young, for instruction; the old, for happiness; while a numerous family of children, the offspring of two marriages, clustered around, and clung to each other, in fond affection; imbibing the wisdom of their father, while they were animated and delighted, by the amiable serenity and captivating graces of his conversation. The necessities of his country occasioned frequent absences; but every return to his home was celebrated by the people, as a festival; for he was their physician, their counsellor, and the arbiter of their differences; the medicines which he imported, were carefully and judiciously dispensed; and the equity of his decisions was never controverted by a court of law.”

And, to give a finishing polish to this beautiful portrait of this estimable man, it may be added, that he was a professed believer in the Christian religion; and this avowal of his faith was made amid the accumulated honors of the world, which were lavishly bestowed on him, with sincere good will, and in the full unclouded exercise of his vigorous mind.

This highly honored and distinguished man, and eminent benefactor of his country, closed his useful life, at Chantilly, in the county of Westmoreland, in Virginia, on the nineteenth day of June, 1794, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

with a confidence of success, make their subsequent approaches with greater security to themselves, and a fuller assurance of success. With this leading object in view, the ministry took care to be informed who, among the men of distinction, would best promote their interest in the colonies. Their method was to tempt the ambition or cupidity, or both together, of individuals, by the covered bribe of an office. The office of governor was always held in reserve for some well tried favorite, sent out from England. But any one of inferior grade, was a bonus in the hands of the royal governor, (subject to ministerial approbation,) to be given to any prominent young man, whose influence it was deemed advisable to secure in favor of the ministry. In Benjamin Harrison, they thought they saw a combination of all those qualifications, which would render him peculiarly beneficial in promoting their designs on the colony of Virginia, if they could secure his adhesion to their views. With this object in view, it was proposed to constitute him, though but a youth, a member of the executive council of the province. This office was correspondent with that of the king's privy council; and it was considered the chief, in point of rank, next to that of governor. But the attempt did not succeed with young Harrison. Of the proceedings in Great Britain, and the measures already disclosed by the ministry, he had been an attentive observer. He thought he discovered in them sure indications of the system they were forming, and of the future course they designed to pursue, relative to the American colonies. To their projects, of course, he was resolutely and firmly opposed on principle. And the offer of any office within their power to confer on him, was not sufficient to swerve him from pursuing steadily and uniformly, the course he had deliberately marked out for himself, relative to his native country. He was therefore open in his union with the patriotic burgesses of Virginia, and consequently became at once an object as obnoxious to the party who courted him, as he had been of their favor, and caresses.

Soon after the measures of parliament became suspected, and excited distrust in America, even so early as 1764, the legislative body of Virginia determined to forward an address to the king, a memorial to the house of lords, and a remonstrance to the house of commons, relating to resolutions that had already been passed; in which they discovered cause of alarm. These resolutions were preliminary to the "Stamp act." For the purpose of preparing those several papers,

they appointed a committee of several distinguished members of their body, on which committee they placed Benjamin Harrison. This was done about the middle of November, 1764. They made their report on the eighteenth of December following.

During the period of ten years, which intervened between the years 1764 and 1774, he was united in sentiment, and acted in harmony, with the first characters in Virginia, at that eventful era. Peyton Randolph, the first president of congress, had married one of his sisters; and his brother William another. Among his political associates may be mentioned, Messrs. Randolph, Wythe, Jefferson, Henry, Braxton, and others of high distinction; who, nearly foreseeing the approaching storm, as faithful watchmen of their country's danger, fanned, nourished, and raised from a small beginning, the spirit of freedom in Virginia; until, like an uncontrolled conflagration, it made all resistance yield to its mighty power, throughout that extensive province.

**The first convention of delegates from the several counties and corporations in Virginia, assembled in Williamsburg on the first of August, 1774: This convention, after passing several resolutions, strongly indicating the spirit of the times, entered with warmth and cordiality into the plan of calling a general congress of delegates from all the colonies, which had been proposed by Massachusetts, to meet and consult for the good of the whole. They zealously approved of the proposal; and in testimony of it, appointed seven delegates to represent Virginia in that assembly. Benjamin Harrison was one of the seven.**

Mr. Harrison was present, and took his seat in the first congress, on the first day of their session; and he was gratified, by the unanimous elevation of a delegate from that state, and a near relative, to the office of president of congress. The session of this congress was short, it having been continued less than two months. The members were, and they felt themselves to be, placed in a situation where every thing was new, and without any guidance from precedent. It was also a situation full of delicacy and danger;—of delicacy, as consisting of delegates from different and distant colonies, each having different interests to be consulted, and provided for, and actuated by feelings corresponding, and, at the same time, involved in one common exposure to evils, on account of which all felt alarmed for the general safety; of danger, inasmuch as it behoved them so to conduct, as

that their enemies in the country at large, should have no occasion to prejudice the people against their proceedings and thus render them and their cause odious. It was also important for them to secure the approbation of other nations; and throw the blame of ulterior measures on their rulers in the British parliament.

It was, in truth, a kind of preparatory meeting, to which every thing was new, and every thing to be commenced. The elements were collected; but they were neither arranged nor assimilated. It was necessary to arrange and assimilate them; to draw the outlines of a system to be pursued contingently; to hold an intercommunication, and learn the views and feelings of themselves, and the colonies they represented; to arrange a general plan of operations; publish an outline of their proceedings, and a recommendation of what they deemed immediately expedient for the citizens generally; and return to their constituents to prepare them for another congress. This congress may be justly considered as a preliminary meeting, pioneering the way for those which followed. Considering every thing that should be taken into the account, perhaps it may be truly affirmed, that a more dignified, wise, and venerable set of men, never assembled for the discussion of political subjects, in any nation on the globe.

Soon after their return from congress, another convention of delegates from the same sources as the first, met in Richmond, and Mr. Harrison, having been chosen a member, had the satisfaction of seeing all the proceedings of the first congress approved by that body.

The patriotic spirit in Virginia at that time, ran high. A proposal to adopt certain preparatory measures of defence, was introduced, discussed, and finally carried, though opposed as premature and injudicious; while a result of the proceedings of the late congress was unknown, and yet pending. The proposition was opposed by Mr. Harrison and his colleagues in congress, and others who were highly distinguished for their patriotism and intelligence. But when it was carried, and Mr. Harrison was placed on the committee for carrying it into effect, he considered it his duty to yield his individual sentiments, and united cordially in promoting what was now approved as the policy to be pursued by the province.

By that convention he was again elected a delegate to the next congress. According to his appointment, he took his

seat in the second congress early in May, 1775. At this time, the only members present from Virginia, were George Washington, Peyton Randolph, and Benjamin Harrison. Mr. Randolph was the president of congress. The session had but just commenced before the president, who was also speaker of the house of burgesses in his native province, was called to attend to discharge the duties of that office, and was necessitated to leave congress and return to Virginia. General Washington having taken the command of the American army in Massachusetts, Mr. Harrison only remained to represent Virginia, in congress. Mr. Randolph's decease in the autumn of 1775, left a vacancy in the office of president. Mr. Hancock, a delegate from Massachusetts, had recently taken his seat. His patriotic exertions at home were well known and highly estimated; and his exclusion from pardon by the royal governor's proclamation, directed the attention of congress to him as successor to Mr. Randolph, in the president's chair. He was unanimously chosen to that high and honorable office.

It has been observed, that the principal business in the old congress was submitted to committees, appointed for the roughly investigating the subjects referred to them, arranging their details, and presenting them in the form of a report. The whole concerns of the war department, of the finance department, &c. &c. was transacted by a board, or committee, without the aid of a secretary to either. On this general principle, Mr. Harrison was much employed on committees, which had a superintendence of military operations, and supplies. He was appointed early in the second congress on a committee, to devise ways and means for putting the militia in a proper condition for defending the country. This was a laborious and difficult task, by reason of a total destitution of arrangement; and an almost equal destitution of regular discipline among the militia, in the colonies, at that period. The report of that committee, after some amendments, constituted the basis of the militia system pursued through the war.

Congress adjourned on the first of August; and on the eleventh of the same month Mr. Harrison was chosen a third time to the same office. By reason of the strong interest he had manifested in whatever related to the military concerns of the country, he was selected to take an active part in that portion of the public business. Congress deemed it necessary to hold a personal conference with the commander in chief

and the governors of the New England states, by means of a deputation from their body. Mr. Harrison was appointed one of that deputation, and he with his colleagues, immediately repaired to Cambridge, in Massachusetts, where the head quarters of the commander in chief then were. There and on that occasion, the plan for continuing, supporting, and regulating the continental army was devised. Immediately after that mission had closed, and he had reached the seat of government, a similar service was resigned to him, relative to the troops that were required for the defence of South Carolina and New York.

Hitherto the attention of congress had been confined principally to the internal concerns of the country. But it became more and more apparent, that the conflict would be both arduous and protracted ; and congress felt the necessity of preparing for such consequences as were anticipated, in the best way they were able.

The government began near the close of 1775, cautiously to open a correspondence abroad, with a view to extend its political relations to the rival powers of Great Britain, on the European continent, preparatory to procuring aid and succours from them, such as might become indispensable for America, if the war should become a general one over the country. This correspondence could not be carried on openly, according to the established forms of diplomacy between independent nations. America had not taken the ground of independence, and was viewed as in a state of rebellion against its lawful sovereign ; although the state of things was not contemplated with an unfavorable eye, by the European states, especially France and Spain. And it may be supposed that the *people* of Holland did not deeply regret any loss that might be derived to England, in consequence of the struggle. It is highly probable that a separation of the colonies from Great Britain, and an establishment of an independent government, was contemplated even at that time, by well informed people, on both sides of the Atlantic.

With a view to organizing a plan of operations, preparatory to seeking directly the aid they foresaw must be obtained, in the event that the opening conflict was to be continued for some years, congress instituted a committee of foreign correspondence, which might perhaps be correctly considered as a board for carrying on indirect diplomatic intercourse. Its duties, as specified in the resolution by which it was constituted, were to hold correspondence with the friends of the Americans.

in Great Britain, Ireland, and *other parts of the world*, which was to be submitted to congress from time to time, and was to be sustained at the public expense. Mr. Harrison was chairman of that committee. Thus cautiously, and with such wisdom, prudence, and discretion, did the early American congress proceed in conducting the great business in which they had engaged; with few lights of experience before them, and a responsibility resting on them, the amount of which can hardly be estimated. Every thing which congress undertook, at that early stage of its existence, was done by committees. All the foreign intercourse, by official correspondence on the part of congress, was performed by that board, until the spring of 1777. Then a committee of foreign affairs was organized, with a secretary appointed by congress, to whom a permanent salary was paid.

Mr. Harrison was hardly inducted into this office, before congress deputed him on a mission to Maryland, to counteract, in connection with other patriots in that province, the incursions of Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, who had the preceding year been driven from that province. Being compelled to vacate his official station, and to retire, in the indulgence of a vindictive spirit, he collected a number of adherents to the royal cause, consisting to a great extent of low and worthless characters; and with them, armed and manned a number of small vessels. Thus equipped, he selected the shores of the Chesapeake for the theatre of their operations. Their employment was, to invade the peaceable inhabitants living along both sides of that extensive bay, and capture and pillage the defenceless inhabitants, and fill the region with consternation and wretchedness.

Mr. Harrison promptly attended to the duties of his mission; and, although the means for repulsion at his command were very small, yet by a wise and judicious application of them, he in a great measure succeeded in counteracting the plans of his lordship, for spreading distress and ruin among the inhabitants in that exposed region.

It is deemed unnecessary to give a minute detail of all the particular services to which he was designated. They were both interesting and important, intimately connected with the achievement of our independence, and the countless blessings resulting therefrom. But, still the detail would not add any peculiar interest to a sketch of his life. Suffice it then to remark, that he was placed on almost every committee for promoting in various ways, and by all practicable

means, the military and naval service of the country, during the term he served in the continental congress. In them all, Mr. Harrison was among the most intelligent and prominent actors; and the services he rendered to the cause of his country, both in the hall of congress, and by journeyings to distant parts of the continent, on special missions, were arduous, and almost incessant.

The first measure of congress, preparatory to the Declaration of Independence, and decisive of the warlike attitude which they intended to assume and maintain, was the act authorizing the issuing of letters of marque, and for fortifying some ports for the protection of American cruisers and their prizes.

The business of fortifying these ports was assigned to a committee, of which Mr. Harrison was the chairman. He was also chairman of the committee on the Canada expedition. The committee of fourteen members, whose duty it was, in connection with the general officers of the army, to arrange a plan for the campaign for 1776, recognized him as their chairman. It was soon found that a business so much extended and diversified, as the military concerns of the country had become, required a more permanent superintendence than occasional committees, the system hitherto adopted; and a board of war and ordnance was organized in June, 1776. This board consisted of five members of congress, and a secretary, on whom the whole superintendence of the duties of that department were devolved. Of this board, Mr. Harrison was early appointed chairman, an office which he sustained during his continuance in congress.

He was very frequently called to preside over the deliberations of congress, as chairman of that body, when acting in "committee of the whole;" and was in the chair, during the discussions on the great subject of independence.

The almost constant appointment of Mr. Harrison to what was then viewed a highly honorable station, during the consideration of the most interesting, delicate, and important subjects—that of declaring the states free and independent, and the confederation of the states; may serve to show the high, and honorable estimation in which he was held by all the members of the house, and indicative of the satisfactory manner in which he presided over their deliberations.

While Mr. Harrison was absent from Virginia, attending congress, the general convention had met in Richmond; and beside forming a constitution of state government, they re-



solved to elect but five, instead of seven delegates to congress, as they had done before. Mr. Harrison was not included in the number, who were elected to the next congress. His term of service expired in August. That convention had assembled in June. He was appointed, however, to a high office in the state, under their new government. In that, there were recognized eight counsellors of state; and he was unanimously appointed one of that council. It has been suggested that he was left out of their delegation to congress, by reason of a disaffection which some part of his conduct had excited, when he was a member. With that question the writer has nothing to do. If it was so, its effects were of short continuance. For on the resignation of Mr. Jefferson, which occurred soon after, Mr. Harrison was chosen to supply the vacancy, on the tenth of October following, with but five dissenting votes.

By that neglect he was absent from congress about three months; but immediately on his return, he was replaced in all the offices he had sustained, and others were added of much interest, and great importance.

If he had been unpopular in Virginia for a short time, by reason of any cause, the excitement against him soon passed away; insomuch that he was returned a member of congress again in May, 1777, by a joint ballot of both houses of their legislature.

Although it is acknowledged, that all the members of congress were active and useful; and all have both merited and received the gratitude of posterity, yet it must be admitted that few, if any individuals in that memorable assembly were more industrious, or more extensively useful, than Benjamin Harrison.

At one period of the revolutionary war, it may be recollected that the "*Friends*," who hold it to be morally wrong to engage in war, were pressed to take up arms in defence of their country. There were some ardent individuals in congress, who were not disposed to grant an indulgence of the kind to the members of that respectable portion of the Christian community. The perilous condition, and urgent necessities which then pressed the government, were thought to constitute a sufficient ground to justify a resort to compulsory measures, for bringing the Quakers to take up arms, or to provide substitutes. This meeting with a steady opposition from the "*Friends*," led to the arrest of some of their number in Philadelphia. In this state of the business, Mr.

Harrison, though an ardent supporter of the war himself interposed as a mediator; and in their estimation, he saved them from "persecution," by his prudent management and influence. His successful efforts in their behalf, were gratefully acknowledged by those who were rescued from their threatened peril, by his timely interposition in their favor.

In the latter part of the year 1777, Mr. Harrison for various and important reasons, expressed his wish to leave congress, and return to his native residence in Virginia. He had been in congress more than three years; and all that time actively employed in attending to business for the public, to the almost entire exclusion of his own private affairs. His fortune had been impaired during that time. And his services were much needed in his native state. He tendered his resignation and returned to Virginia, where he was received with warm expressions of respect and esteem by the inhabitants.

His grateful fellow citizens in his native county, at once returned him a member of the house of burgesses, and that assembly immediately elected him their speaker. This station he continued to occupy till 1782, without interruption. He had other offices of honorable distinction conferred on him by the legislature of Virginia. One of these was that of "county lieutenant," corresponding to the king's lieutenant under the old government, when Virginia was a royal colony. This appointment constituted him commander of the military, and a presiding judge in all the civil courts of the county. In fact, with the title of "colonel," he was by office the chief magistrate of the county, civil and military.

His active services for the relief of Virginia at that gloomy period, when she was first invaded by Arnold, and then by Cornwallis, are gratefully recognized by the inhabitants, and will continue to be so long as history presents to them the record of his sacrifices, and unwearied patriotic exertions for her benefit.

In 1782, Mr. Harrison succeeded Mr. Nelson as governor of the state. The situation was both critical and perplexing. And although the chief magistrate of so large a state, by reason of the revulsions which were caused by the approaching restoration of peace, was necessarily involved in many perplexing and embarrassing conditions, Mr. Harrison managed the public affairs with so much energy and discretion, that he was one of the most popular governors that had ever occupied that high office in the state. He served his state in that

capacity two successive terms, until he became constitutionally ineligible. He then returned to private life. But his fellow citizens did not suffer him to remain long in that situation. Immediately, and without his knowledge, they announced him a candidate to represent them in the house of burgesses. This was the instance before mentioned, in which he failed of an election by the intrigues of a rival, who was anxious to be returned, that he might be chosen speaker. He knew that he could not succeed in the last object of his ambition, if Mr. Harrison should be elected. He was frustrated, however, by Mr. Harrison's being chosen for an adjoining county, and immediately elected speaker, on the house coming together.

When the federal constitution had been framed, he was a member of the Virginia convention, to which it was submitted for adoption.

In the year 1790, having again become eligible, he was announced as a candidate for the office of governor. But he opposed the nomination, because the office had been held but two years by the then governor, Beverley Randolph; and Mr. Harrison thought the opposition to his re-election was unreasonable, and would not by any act of his countenance it. And it was by his instrumentality that Mr. Randolph was re-elected, who was not only an amiable man, but a warm personal friend of Mr. Harrison. He even carried his generous friendship for governor Randolph so far, as to prevail with his own son, who was also a member, to vote for him, in opposition to himself. He was designated as a candidate for the office, after his friend's term had elapsed.

The gout had attacked him some years before. In 1791, it assumed a sudden and alarming appearance. He partially recovered from its effects at that time; so that he was again elected to the legislature in 1791. The day after this election, which was unanimous, he had invited a party of his friends to dine with him; and they congratulated him on his being the next governor of Virginia. But his days were already numbered. That very night he experienced a relapse; and the following day, with composure and resignation, he breathed his last.

He was married in early life, to Miss Elizabeth Bassett, a daughter of Colonel William Bassett, and a niece of Mrs. Washington. She survived her husband only one year. She was considered in her youth as a beautiful person, and is still remembered as having been at a later period, a woman of eminent piety and benevolence: thus uniting in person

and character, the brightest ornaments of the female character.

His offspring were numerous, but several of them died at their birth, or in early infancy. Seven survived to adult years; three sons and four daughters. William Henry Harrison, lately minister to the republic of Colombia, is his youngest son.

He inherited a large fortune from his father; and according to the old English law of primogeniture, he twice received a large addition to it by the decease of relatives. His fortune suffered considerable diminutions, by reason of the adversity of the times, and some unsuccessful speculations of his own. But he still possessed the means of sustaining the general reputation of southern hospitality on a very liberal scale. His residence in Berkeley, was the resort of respectable strangers, who visited his neighborhood, where they were received with a cordial welcome, and entertained with the liberal hospitality still characteristic of a Virginia planter.

His talents as a statesman were of the solid and useful kind, rather than brilliant. He rarely took any distinguished part in the debates in congress; but was emphatically a man of business.

Such was Benjamin Harrison—a sincere and warm-hearted friend; an upright, intelligent, and active statesman; an inflexible, resolute patriot, and a high-minded honorable man. And his name, inscribed on the great charter of American freedom, will be handed down to posterity with undiminished respect and gratitude.



### THOMAS NELSON. JUN.

WILLIAM NELSON, the father of Thomas Nelson, was of English extract. The family had, on their emigration to America, settled at York, in Virginia, where he established himself at a suitable age, in mercantile business. By persevering industry, care, and prudence, he accumulated a large property.

Thomas Nelson, the subject of this sketch, was the oldest son of his parents. He was born at their residence in York, December the 26th, 1738. In 1753, when he had entered

on his fifteenth year, his father, according to the prevailing fashion among gentlemen of affluence at the south, sent him to England for his education. He was placed under the charge of a Mr. Newcomb, a gentleman who kept a private school in a village a short distance from London. After spending a sufficient time, prosecuting his preparatory studies under that careful preceptor, he was removed to Cambridge, and was entered a member of Trinity College; and in that station he was placed under the instruction, as his private tutor, of the late justly celebrated Doctor Proteus, afterwards bishop of London.

In this pleasant situation, enjoying the esteem and instructions of his distinguished tutor, connected with the ample means for acquiring an education, which are furnished in an English university, he continued his literary pursuits until 1761, when he returned to America.

The first notice of his appearance in public life, is in 1774, at which date he was a member of the provincial house of burgesses, in his native colony. This was the session of that body, in which several spirited resolutions were passed, strongly disapproving the "Boston port and fishery bill."

In consequence of these proceedings of the house of burgesses, Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, to show his displeasure, and to prevent further disloyal proceedings, exercised his vice regal authority, and by proclamation dissolved the assembly. This act of the governor the legality of which was not contested, only served more highly to excite the public feelings. Eighty-nine of the members, among whom was Nelson, assembled the following day at a neighboring tavern, and formed the celebrated association, which spoke with more boldness, and in a more efficient manner to the supremacy of his lordship, than the resolutions passed by the assembly of burgesses. They declared that their rights had been unwarrantably invaded; that they would persevere in withholding all commercial intercourse with Great Britain; and that they recommended the appointment of delegates to meet in a general congress. Shortly after the dissolution of the assembly by Lord Dunmore, another was elected, to which Mr. Nelson was returned a member by the same county, which he had before represented. The royal displeasure against the last legislative assembly, so summarily manifested by his lordship, did not intimidate or discourage the patriotic members, nor their constituents. On the contrary, it rather increased their determination to

persevere in their opposition to the arbitrary proceedings of the British parliament; and stimulated them to an exercise of greater vigilance, relative to all their measures, which were to have a bearing on the inhabitants of the American provinces. Mr. Nelson's constituents immediately elected him a member of the first general convention of Virginia; which met at Williamsburgh in the beginning of August, 1774. This act clearly indicated their approbation of his conduct, in the meeting of the eighty-nine members of the recently dissolved assembly; and it might have convinced his lordship, and the other supporters of parliamentary supremacy, that there was a spirit roused among the people that would not easily be quelled nor intimidated.

Mr. Nelson was appointed in the spring of 1775, a member of a second general convention. In this assembly he exhibited the same boldness of spirit, and the same readiness to promote and encourage such preparatory measures for protecting and defending the colonies, against oppression and invasion, which had characterized him in the preceding assemblies of that description. Indeed, his conduct on this occasion, by its boldness, alarmed some of his personal friends, and decided patriotic coadjutors, in the cause of the people against their oppressors.

What so greatly alarmed Mr. Nelson's friends, when he proposed it, was a proposition to organize a military force in the province. It was at that time truly, a bold measure; but he had the support of Mr. Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and some others to uphold him in his resolution; and Mr. Henry brought forward a series of resolutions, in which the plan for carrying that proposal into operation, was placed before the convention in its details. It was warmly debated. In that debate Mr. Nelson fearlessly advocated its adoption; and engaged, if the resolutions were adopted, to exert his personal efforts for carrying the measure into full effect, in the region where he held a command in the militia. They were adopted by the convention; and he redeemed his pledge. From that moment the course which Virginia would pursue in the event of open hostilities, was no longer doubtful.

The design which the ministry had secretly formed, for taking possession of the ammunition and military stores, that had been collected and deposited in magazines in the several provinces, was soon divulged, by attempts on the part of several of the governors to carry it into effect, by means of an armed force. This furnished full evidence, which more

effectually than a thousand arguments, convinced the people of the wisdom, and prudent foresight of those, who had led in that bold and alarming measure, and clearly satisfied them of its necessity.

A third general convention was convened in July of the same year, at the city of Richmond. The late conduct of Governor Dunmore, relative to the powder in the magazine at Williamsburgh, and his subsequent retreat on board of an English man of war, as a place of refuge, clearly admonished the people of Virginia, that the time for conciliation was passed by; and that it became them then to act. Accordingly, that convention assumed an attitude, with reference to the measures of the British government, which would admit of no doubt about their ultimate determination, if the king and parliament persisted in their arbitrary course towards the American colonies. They divided the province into military districts; directed the number of men to be raised in each; appointed Mr. Henry to the command of one regiment; Mr. Nelson to the command of another; and Mr. William Woodford to that of a third—each with the commission of colonel.

In August, the same convention proceeded in their business, and appointed delegates to congress for the term of one year. Several causes had concurred in producing three vacancies in the Virginia representation. In electing their delegates for the year, these vacancies were to be filled; and Colonel Thomas Nelson, Jun. was appointed to supply one of them. He took his seat in congress on the thirteenth day of September, 1775. On almost all subjects his feelings were naturally ardent. While in congress, however, he took out little part in debate; but was actively employed on committees; and his services were rendered with punctuality and fidelity. His perception was quick; his determinations were promptly made; and when formed, they were adhered to with a perseverance which no obstacle could turn aside.

His public services were manifestly acceptable to his constituents at home; for, during his absence at Philadelphia, the convention of Virginia reappointed him a delegate to congress for the year following, viz. 1776. During that period he set his name to the Declaration of Independence.

On the second day of May, 1777, an event occurred which alarmed him and his friends in the house; and for a time, suspended his attention to public business entirely. While sitting in his seat in the hall of congress he was suddenly

seized with a painful attack in his head, which obliged him immediately to retire to a private dwelling. It impaired, and for a time nearly suspended his memory.

It was with difficulty that he could be prevailed with to withdraw at that time from the scene of his public duties, even for the recovery of his health; so desirous was he of rendering every assistance to the great cause in which he had engaged. He remained in Philadelphia for some time, with a hope that a speedy recovery would obviate the necessity for his retiring. But this proved delusive; and he yielded to the necessity of the case, returned to Virginia, and when the convention assembled, he resigned his seat.

His return to Virginia, however, at the same time that it contributed to a partial restoration of his health, proved to be a transfer of his services from one active theatre of public service to another, although of a different kind from that in which he had hitherto been engaged. Intelligence was communicated to the governor and council of Virginia, that a British fleet had arrived on their coast, and was then within the capes of Virginia. The militia of the commonwealth were ordered to march to the exposed points of attack with all possible expedition; and Colonel Nelson was immediately appointed by the governor and council, brigadier general and commander in chief of the military forces of the state. This appointment he accepted, but generously declined receiving any emoluments from the office. His popularity in the state was almost unbounded; and the appointment of him to the chief command of their military forces was universally popular and acceptable. The sudden alarm, however, passed away without any other service for the militia, than that of assembling, as Sir William Howe did not visit Virginia at that time, but moved his fleet forward up the Chesapeake Bay.

About this time a motion was made in the legislature of Virginia, to sequester the debts due in that state to English merchants. The proposition was to collect the money from the debtors, and have it deposited in the state treasury. By many it was warmly advocated. But by General Nelson it was warmly and inflexibly opposed. This was in conformity to his uniform character, and will redound to his honor, so long as integrity, justice, and morality hold their standing among human virtues.

While the subject was under discussion in the legislature, of which he was then a member, he said, "I hope, for the reasons I have assigned, this bill will not pass; but whatever



may be its fate, I solemnly declare, I will pay my debts like an honest man."

At this period the finances of the country were exhausted; the credit of congress was gone; and the American army reduced, and threatened with annihilation; and it was never more necessary to have it not only recruited, but greatly increased, to meet and repel the dangers with which the country was threatened. In these circumstances, congress made an appeal to the honor and patriotism of the young men of property, and honorable standing in society, in the several states, as far south as to include North Carolina. When the appeal was published in Virginia, General Nelson entered into the measure with his characteristic ardor in his own state. He published an animating address on the subject, and succeeded in raising a voluntary corps of about seventy young men, to some of whom he opened his own purse, to enable those who were unable to equip themselves; and furnished a number of them with the means of defraying their expenses, while repairing to the army, under the immediate command of General Washington. At the head of this spartan band, whose commander he became, although then a general officer, he proceeded to Baltimore, and thence to Philadelphia, where they held themselves in readiness to move on to head quarters at command. But a change of circumstances having unexpectedly occurred, and their services not being especially demanded, after receiving the public thanks of congress, they returned to their homes. In this enterprise, General Nelson suffered the loss of a large sum of money, which his generous patriotism induced him to advance in aid of the government which was never repaid to him.

The active bodily exercise which these calls required, produced a beneficial effect on his health. He became so much recruited, and invigorated by it, that the people again solicited him to become a delegate to congress. He consented; and once more took his seat in that assembly, on the eighteenth day of February, 1779. But he was suffered to remain only a short time in that service. In April following, another attack of his former complaint was experienced by him; and after a short time, increasing infirmity, and a hopeless prospect of being able to pursue his business, together with the advice of physicians, prevailed with him to return to his home.

But even bodily infirmity, so long as it did not absolutely disable him, was not sufficient to cause him to be inactive. *Indeed*, the time and the condition of Virginia, did not admit

of rest to any one who could be active ; and nothing short of insurmountable necessity would permit a man of the feelings of General Nelson, to remain inactive under the then existing circumstances of his native state.

In the month of May, the British entered on a predatory system of warfare, which they commenced in Virginia, by visiting a part of the state with a squadron, which sailed first to Portsmouth near Norfolk. They destroyed that village by burning the houses and stores, and plundering every thing they could carry away. Similar depredations and ravages were extended to a number of other places. A great alarm was excited ; and General Nelson, notwithstanding his impaired health, immediately, and with the greatest personal activity, collected a military force, and marched them to Yorktown ; afterwards the theatre of Cornwallis's capture. There it was believed they would make landing to pursue their system of destruction ; and the force was marched thither for its defence. But the enemy, after effecting their object in the vicinity of Norfolk, returned to New York. This sudden call of the militia, subjected some families to great inconvenience, by the absence of their active members, and the consequent neglect of their agricultural business. Or this occasion, the characteristic benevolence of General Nelson was not omitted. During their necessary absence, the general sent his slaves, and other domestics to labor for their support, and supply their deficiency during their necessary absence from home.

His liberal and disinterested patriotism was continually manifested, by new instances of devotedness to it. One more will be mentioned. It is worthy of notice ; and it is but a fair sample of his general character.

In June, 1780, the arrival of the French fleet and armament was momentarily expected. It was of vast importance that congress should make provision for them on their arrival. For this a sum of money was necessary, which they could not command. The credit of congress was prostrate ; and that of Virginia, in but a little more desirable condition. In these circumstances, the state undertook to borrow two millions of dollars for the aid of congress ; that it might be able to make the necessary accommodation which the exigency required. General Nelson opened a subscription for this purpose. Calling on several friends, they declared that they would not lend the governor a shilling on the security of the commonwealth ; but they would lend *him* all they could possi-

bly raise. He immediately added his own personal security to that of the state; and thus succeeded in raising a large proportion of the sum required. Such conduct is worthy of the perpetual remembrance and gratitude of the American people.

By this and other similar patriotic exertions to aid the public in its impoverished state, General Nelson suffered serious pecuniary losses, and materially impaired the ample fortune, with which he commenced his honorable career. But he never relaxed his exertions. He had, at the beginning, anticipated sufferings and sacrifices, in effecting the independence of his country; and he prepared his mind to meet and sustain them.

In the spring of 1781, the storm of war seemed to burst on Virginia. Philips and Arnold hovered along her coast with a flotilla, and threatened to ravage wherever they could effect a landing. Cornwallis was marching over the southern counties, with an army which no force at command could withstand. While General Nelson was actively employed in effecting plans for opposing the enemy, and continually engaged as a military officer, he was called to discharge the high civil duties of the executive of the state. Mr. Jefferson had held the office of governor; but his term had expired; and General Nelson was appointed his successor. But the times and condition of the state required Governor Nelson to assume the command of all the military forces he could collect, and uniting in himself the two offices of governor of the state, and commander in chief of the militia, he marched in the latter capacity, and formed a junction with General La Fayette, who had been sent to Virginia with a body of continental troops, to check the ravages of the enemy. Having joined the general, Governor Nelson immediately put himself under his command; and thus secured harmony of action in the united army.

At the time when the British were ravaging Virginia, and making sudden incursions in one place after another, driven from their place of regular meeting by the vigilant Tarleton, the legislature passed a law investing the governor and executive council with the powers of government. But the executive council had been dismembered. Two of the eight had been captured by Tarleton; two others had resigned, and the other four were so situated with respect to the governor, that it was impracticable for him to avail himself of their legal advice. The government therefore virtually de-

volved on him individually. In these circumstances he was necessitated to exercise it in his own name, and by his sole authority. The safety of the people demanded this at his hands; and yet it impelled him to do, at times, what was not strictly legal. Complaints were afterwards made of his conduct; and the subject was brought to an investigation. The statement he rendered to the legislature satisfied that body; and they immediately passed a law, legalizing his measures at that time, and indemnifying him against all future responsibility.

By great efforts Governor Nelson kept his forces together, until the capture of Lord Cornwallis's army at Yorktown, decided the long conflict in favor of the American cause. To do this, he exerted his personal influence, his official authority, and the resources of his private fortune to their utmost extent. And, to all these, he added his presence at the head of the militia, in the siege of Yorktown, and shared with them the toils, deprivations, dangers, and honors of that glorious achievement.

Governor Nelson had a handsome house in the town; and during the siege, he observed that while the American artilleryists demolished other dwellings, his remained uninjured. It was at this time filled with a large number of British officers, who were at the moment seated at the dinner table, enjoying their entertainment. The governor inquired why his house was spared? The reply was, out of respect for the proprietor. He begged that that fact might make no difference. A well directed fire from some of the American artillery, killed at the first discharge two of the officers, and soon dislodged the rest of the company, and effectually put an end to their conviviality.

After the victory was achieved, General Washington, in his account of it, made a very honorable acknowledgement of the valuable services of Governor Nelson, and the militia under his command during the siege, in securing its important issue.

At the end of a month after the capture of Cornwallis, Gov. Nelson found his health so feeble, and his constitution so much impaired, that he resigned his office; and his resignation was accepted. He once more returned to private life. But the repose which he sought was not then realized; for it was at this time that the accusations before mentioned, of maladministration of his office, were presented against him. And these, it was, which led to his honorable exculpation

by the legislature; and the passage of an act giving to all his measures during his administration the sanction of law.

He now resolved to retire wholly from public service, and spend the remainder of his life with his family. For this purpose he went to an estate which he owned at Offly, in the county of Hanover. Here, in the tranquil scenes of rural life, surrounded by his family, he received not only his numerous friends and strangers from distant parts of his own country, who called to visit him, but foreigners of distinction.

After this retirement, General Nelson was no more engaged in public life. He lived entirely in retirement; and spent the remainder of his life alternately at Offly on his farm, and in his mansion at York. But his health gradually continued to decline until 1789, when he died at his residence in Hanover county, on the fourth day of January, at the age of fifty years.



### FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE.

FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE, the fourth son of Thomas Lee of Virginia, and brother of Richard Henry Lee, one of the most distinguished patriots, and eloquent advocates of American Independence, was born on the fourteenth day of October, 1734.

According to the fashion of that age, with gentlemen of fortune in the southern provinces, the elder sons of Thomas Lee were sent to England for their education. But Francis was of too tender an age, at the decease of his father, to be sent abroad, and was favored with only what was justly deemed secondary advantages for procuring a classical education at home.

Happily for young Francis, his tutor was a Scottish clergyman, of a good character, a man of science, and a correct classical scholar, and who not only made his pupil a good scholar, but imbued him with an early taste for reading, and mental investigation, unusual at his age, and especially among those who possess all the means of indulging in the fashionable pleasures. While many promising youths have pressed forward the course of dissipation, young Lee was, under the

influence and counsel of his judicious instructor, gaining a stock of valuable knowledge, which laid a foundation for the course of usefulness and honor, which marked his subsequent career in life.

His brothers, who had been to England to receive the benefit of English schools, and the polish of English society, returning about the time when he attained to manhood, presented such models for imitation, as seem to have enkindled a desire to emulate them in the acquisition of knowledge, as well as in highly polished manners.

The ample fortune left him by his father, precluded a necessity for seeking a profession, as a means for his support.

Feeling, in common with his brethren, that warm and patriotic attachment to his country, which was strongly characteristic of his family, Francis Lightfoot Lee, amid the youthful pursuit of whatever gratification he desired, had his mind arrested by the gathering storm; and his efforts were exerted for effecting the best security against the desolating effects of its violence, whenever it might burst on the colonies.

Closely associated with his brother Richard Henry, and implicitly confiding in his superior wisdom and judgment Francis had frequent opportunities of listening to his animating eloquence, and oracular harangues, by which he early and perseveringly attempted to rouse up his neighbors to a just view of their dangers, and to kindle in them a spirit of daring and determined resistance, similar to that which animated his own breast. To these Francis listened with attention and profit. His fascinating pursuits after pleasure were soon relinquished, that he might engage in others of higher interest, and more enduring consequences.

While his brother was returned a member of the Virginia house of burgesses, for the county of Westmoreland, in which he resided, Francis, holding his property in Loudoun county, offered himself a candidate for representing his fellow citizens of that county, in the same legislative assembly. He was successful; and he took his seat in that body about the year 1765—the period in which apprehensions of the American colonists were first awakened to the insidious designs of the British parliament upon their rights, in the memorable “Stamp act.” By the periodical-election of his fellow citizens, Mr. Lee was returned a member of the house of burgesses; and he continued to occupy his seat in that body until the year 1772.

Having, in the mean time, formed a connection by mar-

riage with the daughter of Colonel John Taylor, of Richmond, he removed thither, and made that city the place of his permanent residence; and when the term of service had expired, for which he had been returned by the citizens of Loudoun county, he was elected a member for Richmond.

While he remained a member of the house of burgesses, in the Virginia legislature, he continued to unite his efforts to those of his brother and Patrick Henry, to rouse his patriotic countrymen from their inattention to their danger, and to frustrate the designs, and neutralize the insidious influence, of the active partizans of the royal cause in Virginia.

In the year 1775, Francis Lightfoot Lee was elected a delegate to congress, by the Virginia convention, to supply the seat vacated by the resignation of Colonel Bland. He was regularly re-elected to the same station, during the three following years of 1776, 1777, and 1778; in the first of which he voted for and signed the Declaration of Independence. He does not appear to have distinguished himself as a speaker, in public debate, either in the Virginia legislature, or on the floor of congress. But he was esteemed a useful member of both. In congress he was a member of several important committees; and frequently presided as chairman, when in committee of the whole. He was also a member for Virginia of that memorable committee, which framed the articles of the confederation; a labor, surrounded with difficulties and embarrassments enough to have discouraged statesmen of less devoted and persevering patriotism, than influenced the venerable members of the continental congress, in that eventful period.

Mr. Lee entirely and uniformly harmonized with his brother, Richard Henry, in his sentiments respecting the fisheries, and the free navigation of the Mississippi River. While many of the southern members of congress and several of his colleagues would have been contented, on securing their own immediate interests, which immediately affected the states they severally represented, he, with his distinguished brother, strenuously maintained, that no treaty ought to be concluded, which did not recognize the right of the United States to both of those valuable privileges.

Mr. Lee continued to serve his native state in congress until the spring of 1779, when he retired to his home; where it was his intention to have spent the remainder of his days in the enjoyment of domestic quiet, to which he was strongly attached. But his fellow citizens still desiring his services,

sent him once more to their legislature ; and gave him a seat in the senate of Virginia. But after a short engagement there, he determined to relinquish all engagements in public life, and bid a final adieu to its labors, turmoils, and cares. This determination he soon carried into effect, and retired from every public service to the close of his life.

Having no children, he was exempted, in his declining years, from the usual solicitude which parents commonly feel for their posterity. Mr. Lee spent his time pleasantly ; devoting it to his friends and relations, whose welcome visits enlivened the cheerfulness of his hospitable dwelling, while reading and agricultural employments, of which he was very fond, were at once agreeable sources of recreation, information, and amusement.

At length a pleurisy seized him, and his beloved companion, in one of the most severe winters that Virginia experienced, and removed them both from the world, within a few days of each other.



### CARTER BRAXTON.

CARTER BRAXTON was born at Newington, in King and Queen's county, in Virginia, on the 10th of September, 1736. His father was George Braxton, a planter of considerable wealth, and appears to have been of some estimation among the gentleman of influence and distinction in the colony, at the time when he lived. His mother was a daughter of Robert Carter, who was for a short time president of the king's council for Virginia. She died young, leaving two sons, the youngest of whom, who is the subject of this memoir, only seven days old. It is probable that his father's death took place when he and his brother George, who was but two years older, were both young.

Carter received a public education at the college of William and Mary. His property was ample ; and at the age of nineteen, he connected himself by marriage, with Miss Judith Robinson, who was a daughter of Christopher Robinson, Esq., a wealthy planter of the county of Middlesex, and reported to have been an accomplished woman. By this marriage, his wealth already large, was considerably in-



creased. She was the mother of two daughters; but she died at the birth of the youngest, at the age of nearly twenty-one years.

Soon after the death of his wife, Mr. Braxton sailed for England, where he continued until 1760, having resided there for a number of years. This excursion is supposed to have been taken for his own gratification and improvement. After his return, he was again married to Miss Elizabeth Corbin, a daughter of a gentleman holding the office of receiver general of the customs for Virginia, under the king. This woman was a mother of a large family; having given birth to sixteen children. Mr. Braxton's style of living was established according to the general mode of southern hospitality, adopted and practised by gentlemen of wealth; and subjected him to great expense. It is well known that the fashion among the large landed aristocracy of Virginia, before the revolution, was established on a liberal scale of hospitality. Mr. Braxton's connections and fortune, required of him to support that style of living, adopted by the rank in society with which he associated; and his national disposition coincided with the custom of the country.

At what time he was brought forward into public office, is not now to be precisely ascertained. He was a member of the house of burgesses, in 1765, when Mr. Henry's strong resolutions were introduced and adopted. Probably he was a member a few years earlier. He was also a member in 1769, when measures were introduced and adopted, which disturbed the feelings of one of the best royal governors that ever presided in Virginia, Lord Botetourt. After his lordship had suddenly dissolved that assembly, in consequence of those spirited measures, Mr. Braxton was one of the members who retired to a private room, and signed a written non-impertation agreement.

Mr. Braxton was returned a member of the next house, and was placed on three of the standing committees uniformly appointed by that assembly, at its opening session.

Lord Botetourt having died between the sessions of 1770 and 1771; after a short interval, in which the executive government was administered by the president of the council, he was succeeded by Lord Dunmore. In that interval, Mr. Braxton held the office of high sheriff of the county where he resided.

The indiscreet administration of Lord Dunmore, contributed to increase and animate the spirit in Virginia, which was

already preparing for decided measures; and impelled the recommendation from eighty-nine members of the house of burgesses, hastily dissolved by him, to recommend the calling of a convention, which met at Williamsburgh, in August, 1774. Of this first convention that ever met in Virginia, Mr. Braxton was a member, having been elected by the people of King William county.

When Lord Dunmore caused the ammunition belonging to Virginia, to be secretly conveyed from the magazine in Williamsburgh, on board of a king's ship then in James River; it occasioned great excitement, and much alarm among the people; and they were about resorting to violent measures to effect a restoration of the powder, or to obtain its value in money. Without descending to a minute detail of the several particular occurrences caused by it, it may be proper to mention, that the wise and prudent course pursued by Mr. Braxton, was essentially instrumental in effecting a settlement on the part of his lordship, which pacified the excited populace, at the head of whom was the patriotic Mr. Henry; and of saving Williamsburgh from the threatened evils of being battered by the guns of the armed ship Fowrey. The captain of that ship having declared that he would fire on the town, if Lord Dunmore was in the least molested.

Thus by the interference and prudent conduct of that gentleman, a settlement was effected, which undoubtedly prevented a great degree of suffering to the inhabitants of that town.

He was a member, and a very active and useful one, of the last house of burgesses that was ever convened in Virginia by royal authority. He was employed as a member of those committees of that house, to whom were referred the subjects of dispute between the legislature and his lordship.

The governor fled for refuge on board the armed ship Fowrey; and thus the royal government in the colony of Virginia became dissolved. He could not be prevailed upon to return to his palace, and resume his official duties; and the legislature being determined not to wait on him on board a ship of war; all the powers of government necessarily devolved on the people, to whom they had now reverted. Those powers, legislative and executive; were resumed with their approbation, by a convention chosen by the people, to meet at Richmond, in July, 1775. Mr. Braxton was a member of that convention. That body now possessing all the power of the province, proceeded to make arrangements for the exigencies of the community, and appointed a committee of

public safety, consisting of some of the first men in Virginia, among whom was that of Mr. Braxton. On that committee devolved all the sovereign power of the colony, during the recess of the convention. Having adjourned on the 26th of August, 1775, to December of the same year, the duty of supplying the vacancy in their representation in congress, occasioned by the death of Peyton Randolph, devolved on them. The convention appointed for his successor Mr. Braxton. He soon took his seat, and was present to give his signature to the Declaration of Independence, and thus ensured immortality to his name.

Mr. Braxton having been omitted in an election for members of congress, subsequent to the Declaration of Independence, it has been supposed that he had fallen under the displeasure of his constituents. But, on a meeting of the general assembly, the first under the new constitution of the state, of which he was a member, he with Mr. Jefferson received a vote of thanks from that assembly, "for the diligence, ability, and integrity, with which they executed the important trust reposed in them, as two of the delegates of the county in the general congress." They were delegates from the county of King William.

In this session of that legislature, he was an active and influential member; and as formerly when a member, he was placed on most, if not all of the important committees. If he ever did incur the displeasure of his fellow citizens, (of which there appears to be no conclusive evidence,) it is obvious that its duration was short; for he was returned a member of the house of representatives in the years 1777-79-80-81-83 and 1785. Their confidence and attachment were unequivocally manifested, in every vicissitude of circumstances, some of which were of the most afflictive kind, even to the close of his life.

In 1786, he was appointed a member of the council of state, and he continued a member of that board until 1791. He was again elected to the same office in May, 1794, and he closed his services in that board on the sixth day of October, 1797, four days after which he breathed his last.

**NORTH CAROLINA.****WILLIAM HOOPER.**

THIS gentleman was a native of Massachusetts, and was born in Boston on the seventeenth day of June, 1742. He was descended from a Scottish ancestry, and his father, after finishing his classical studies in the university of Edinburgh, left his native land and came to Boston, "in the then province of Massachusetts Bay," and fixed his residence in that town.

After receiving a careful preparatory education in part from his father, and afterwards from Mr. John Lovell, William Hooper entered Harvard university at the age of fifteen, and left it at the close of the term of three years, with a reputation for industry and application, peculiarly distinguished at that seminary, and highly honorable to his youthful character. His constitution was feeble, even from his birth; and cannot be supposed to have improved in vigor from his intense application to books, and the sedentary habit invariably connected with a strong desire for scientific acquirements.

After he left college, having manifested a preference for the bar, though contrary to his father's wishes, he was placed in the office of James Otis, and enjoyed the benefit of his instruction.

As the profession of law was fully supplied with practitioners in Massachusetts, he removed to North Carolina, where he had numerous connections, and commenced his professional career in that province.

There he soon found himself associated with gentlemen of a literary character, polished manners, and distinguished hospitality; a society in which was combined that style of living, manners, and feelings, which concurred to render his residence peculiarly desirable.

He had at an early age, assumed and sustained his rank, at the head of the bar in that region, and was highly esteemed by the wealthy and fashionable circle in which he moved, and by whom he was deservedly esteemed and respected.

His professional reputation had become so thoroughly established, even while comparatively a young man, that he

was employed on behalf of the government in several important trials; and he managed them with so much professional skill, and sound judgment, that his character was established as a barrister of high standing in that community. This he retained to the close of his life. He also took an active and decided part on the side of government, against an insurrection that became somewhat formidable, about the year 1770. They assumed the name of regulators; and consisted of low and uninformed people, whose jealousy of the better classes of society had been excited, and their passions inflamed by designing men, who were desirous of overturning the existing order of things, that they might gain something in the scramble. It was, however, subdued at the expense of some blood; and in pursuance of measures recommended by Mr. Hooper.

He commenced his legislative course in 1773, in which year he was chosen a representative of the town of Wilmington, where he had been a resident scarcely six years. This fact will evince the rapidity of his advancement in popular esteem. The same respect was again shown him in the year following, being returned a member for the county of Hanover.

He probably derived the tone of his political sentiments from his instructor, while a law student. He uniformly acted in opposition to oppression, and against turbulence, whether in rulers, or a heated populace. In the house of assembly in North Carolina, he was called on in the faithful discharge of his duty, to oppose the court party; and was, though comparatively young both in years and legislation, selected as the leader of the party, who were the most open and decided in their opposition to the arbitrary measures of the British government. In pursuing the course he had thus marked out, uniformly, and often with great zeal and ardor, as might have been expected, he exasperated the adherents of royal power, and rendered himself very obnoxious to the warm partizans of the ministry and the crown in Great Britain.

The scene began to open in which he was destined to take an active and highly important part. The proposal from Massachusetts, for calling a general congress in 1774, to convene in Philadelphia, had spread its influence over North Carolina; and the calling a convention of delegates to act on the subject was the result. This convention met in Newbern; and having passed a resolution approving of the measure, the convention immediately appointed William Hooper their first delegate to that congress.

Mr. Hooper did not reach Philadelphia, so as to take his seat until the twelfth of September, when congress had been a week in session. Young as he was, he was immediately elected a member of two committees, to whom were intrusted business of the most important character. The subjects submitted to their investigation, and their reports, embraced the broad basis of the system of measures of the general government, in their future progress. They may be considered as pioneers, appointed to mark out and clear the path for the after march of congress in that course of legislation, which was pursued in their succeeding sessions. Their business required men of the first talents, wisdom, and experience. Although there was no lack of the two former in that assembly; in the latter respect, they were necessarily deficient.

Mr. Hooper was again elected to a seat in congress in the spring of 1775, and was very active during the whole session. He was employed in many committees, and several of them having in charge interests of the greatest importance. He was chairman of a committee appointed to report an address to the inhabitants of the Island of Jamaica, on the situation of the North American colonies. The address contained a clear statement and delineation of the injuries inflicted on the colonies, by the British government, and an eloquent appeal to the patriotism of the inhabitants of that island. It was from his pen.

He was continued a member of the congress of 1776, though he was under a necessity for being absent from his seat a considerable part of the spring of that year. The public concerns of North Carolina, as well as his private business, rendered it necessary for him to return to the place of his residence. During his absence in North Carolina, he was called to attend two different conventions in that province—one at Hillsborough, and the other in Halifax. Always ardent, and always active in supporting the cause he had espoused, he was very influential in rousing the feelings of the colony, and inducing them to come forward resolutely to protect their rights, and maintain the cause of the country, against British invasion. By the convention at Hillsborough, his pen was again put in requisition, to draw up an address to the inhabitants of the British empire, which that body had resolved on.

He returned to congress in the summer, and was present in season to record his vote in favor of declaring the North

American colonies independent, in connection with his colleagues, when that question was decided. The measure he advocated with decision, and approved of it with entire cordiality.

Mr. Hooper continued in his seat during the remainder of the session of 1776, and was a member of several committees; among which were those for regulating the post office, the treasury, secret correspondence, and appeals from the courts of admiralty. These were all trusts of much importance, and requiring sound judgment and deliberation.

He was again chosen a member of congress in December, 1776. But he did not long retain his seat. His private affairs had suffered so materially, by reason of his absence, and consequent inattention to them, while engaged in the service of the public, and also by reason of the situation of the country at that dark and gloomy period; that the security of his family made it indispensably necessary that he should retire from congress, and return to North Carolina. Consequently, he obtained leave of absence in March, 1777, and returned to his family; and shortly afterwards, on perceiving that he could not resume his seat in that assembly, he resigned and did not again mingle in its labors and discussions.

Like others who voted to dissolve all allegiance to the king and government of Great Britain, Mr. Hooper was peculiarly odious to English troops; who vented their feelings, and gave indulgence to their revenge, on every opportunity they could embrace for exercising it on their persons, property, and families. While he was absent in Philadelphia, attending to his congressional duties, an English sloop of war, then lying in Cape Fear River, fired upon a dwelling house belonging to him, which was near the river, and a few miles from Wilmington. This fact is worthy of being noticed, only because it shows the strong resentment against those who took a leading part in resisting the arbitrary measures of the British government.

After his retirement from congress, he removed his family from Wilmington, to a plantation which he owned a few miles distant from that town; but the persecuting spirit directed against him personally, did not long suffer him to enjoy his retirement in tranquillity. A Major Craige, an officer in the British service, approached his residence with a considerable force, and compelled him to send his family back to Wilmington, and to seek security for himself in the interior

About this time, when the American affairs were overcast with gloom, and the storm was still gathering blackness, and the final issue of the contest was very doubtful, it is said that Mr. Hooper and other members of congress had concerted with the French minister, to take a residence in one of the French West India islands, as a last resort, if the colonies were obliged in the end to submit.

After the enemy evacuated Wilmington, in 1771, Mr. Hooper with his family returned to his own residence. He remained there however but a short time, and then took up his abode in Hillsborough.

It is probable that he now prosecuted the business of his profession, without meeting with any remarkable event worthy of historical record, until the year 1786, when he was appointed by congress one of the judges of a federal court, which was constituted for the special purpose of settling a controversy that had arisen between Massachusetts, and New York, relative to a territory, which was claimed by each of those states. The cause was one of great importance, but it never was brought before that tribunal. It was finally adjusted by commissioners appointed by the states, and settled without farther litigation.

Mr. Hooper had continued to hold a high rank in the legislative council of the state, and he fully sustained his station at the bar, notwithstanding his feeble constitution and impaired health. But while yet in the prime of life, he began in 1787 to relax in his attention to business, and soon after withdrew wholly from all active employment. His life was now drawing to its close. He lived very much within his family until the month of October, 1790; when at the age of forty-eight years, his earthly existence was closed in Hillsborough in North Carolina.

At his decease he left a widow, two sons and one daughter the last of whom only survives.

Like many of his fellow laborers in the old congress, although he suffered losses and trials, he never once regretted having engaged in the cause of liberty and his country; and amidst all the gloom with which the prospect before America was from time to time overspread, he never desponded, nor suffered himself to be cast down.

When the afflictive intelligence of the disastrous battle of Germantown reached him, he was seated among a party of friends, on whose feelings the intelligence brought an almost overwhelming distress and discouragement. They seemed



ready almost to despair of the cause. But Mr. Hooper, starting from his seat with great animation, repeated the words "we have been disappointed," in which the intelligence was announced, with vehemence he exclaimed, "We *have been* disappointed, but no matter, now that we have become the assailants, there can be no doubt of the issue."



### JOSEPH HEWES.

JOSEPH HEWES was born at Kingston in New Jersey, in the year 1730. His parents, at the time of their marriage, resided in Connecticut, and belonged to the society of Friends.

From Connecticut they removed to New Jersey, where they found a quiet and tranquil retreat in Kingston, a short distance from Princeton.

This proved a very favorable circumstance to Joseph, for when he attained to the proper age for pursuing his studies the vicinity of his father's dwelling to the college in Princeton, furnished him with facilities for procuring an education such as a more distant residence from a seminary of learning would have precluded.

Having finished his academic studies, he went immediately to Philadelphia, and entered as an apprentice to a merchant, to qualify himself for commercial business.

On the close of his apprenticeship, he commenced business on his own account, and by means of peculiar advantages, which at that time attended the colonies, in connection with the protection to merchant ships afforded by the British flag, Mr. Hewes rapidly acquired property. His residence for several years, was divided between New York and Philadelphia, as his business demanded his attention in the one place or the other.

At the age of about thirty years, he removed to North Carolina, and settled in Edenton, which he afterwards made his home for life.

In this his new residence, his industrious attention to business, his probity in his dealings, his sobriety of deportment, his intelligence and address, early acquired for him the esteem and confidence of the inhabitants; insomuch that while

he was yet comparatively a stranger among them, by their voluntary and unsolicited favor, he was called to take a seat in their legislative assembly. That appointment was repeatedly given him, and the duties connected with it he uniformly discharged to the acceptance of his constituents.

North Carolina was early decided in her opposition to the aggressions of the ministry and parliament of Great Britain. Consequently, so soon as the proposal for a general congress was announced to her influential men, measures were adopted for calling a convention to discuss the subject. That convention met fully prepared for the object. Accordingly, three delegates were appointed to attend the first congress in Philadelphia, of whom Joseph Hewes was one.

He entered the session on the fourteenth day of September, 1774; and like all the other delegates, his services were immediately called into action for arranging some of the various subjects which were to be considered, and decided by congress before the session closed. He was placed on the committee for considering and "stating the rights of the colonies in general, the several instances in which those rights had been violated, and the means most proper to be pursued for obtaining a restoration of them."

That committee, after an industrious attention to their duties, reported a bill of rights to which the inhabitants were entitled, just one month from the day on which he entered congress.

Mr. Hewes was another striking instance of self devoted patriotism, of which there were many in those days, worthy of the age in which they lived, and which would honor any age, of any nation. He was a merchant. He had been engaged in the business of importing goods from Great Britain and her dependencies. By importing and selling those goods he procured his support; and this had been his business and the source of his income, more than twenty years; and he had no other. Yet all this must fall a sacrifice by the establishment of a non-importation agreement. But notwithstanding this sacrifice, he aided in maturing such an agreement, voted for it, and exerted himself to have it universally concurred in, and carried into complete effect.

Congress having finished the business of that session, and resolved that it was expedient that there should be another meeting in May, 1775, adjourned. In the spring of 1775, Mr. Hewes was re-elected a delegate to congress, and took his seat accordingly at the time appointed. He was emphati-

cally a man of business. Of whatever committees he was a member, he devoted himself to discharge his several duties with great assiduity, and unwearied perseverance. He was a member of that which had in charge the whole naval department; and he became in effect the first secretary of the navy. He was also a member of the secret committee, whose duties were of the first importance, and of the highest responsibility.

But while he was so much occupied with his multiplied avocations in congress, he was not unmindful of North Carolina. The civil war was raging in that distracted region, and exposed the country to the attack of the common foe. It stood in need of aid; and this aid Mr. Hewes forwarded for her relief, from his own private resources, although he was afterwards remunerated by congress.

The convention of North Carolina, in April, 1776, had voted a resolution, empowering the delegates from that province to concur with those from the other colonies, in declaring independence; and Mr. Hewes, who was present when the question was debated in congress, was under no embarrassment in voting for it in conformity to his established judgment, as well as his views of its indispensable necessity, or in signing the instrument by which it was declared.

As soon as the business of the session would admit, Mr. Hewes returned to North Carolina; and although he was appointed again a delegate to congress in the spring of 1777, he declined resuming his seat at that time. He remained at home, attending to his own private concerns, and to the interests of the state, until July, 1779; he then resumed his seat in congress. But his term of service was fast drawing to its close. His constitution had been severely tried, and his health was now quite feeble. He was able, therefore, to attend but little to the business of the public, or afford his aid to the national councils.

He attended and acted in congress, and gave his last vote in that body, on the twenty-ninth day of October. Thence he betook himself to his chamber, where he was confined until the tenth day of November, when he breathed his last, in the fiftieth year of his age.

His funeral was attended by congress in a body, by many personages of distinction, civil and military, and a large concourse of the citizens of Philadelphia, with marks of sincere regret for his decease, and profound respect for his character

## JOHN PENN

To the number of honorable instances of individuals, who rose to eminence and distinction, among the leading patriots of the American revolution, by their own resolute and persevering efforts, with but little aid from others, may be added the name of John Penn. He emerged from obscurity, such as would have disheartened men of less energy of character, at the outset. But he resolved on accomplishing his purpose and he did accomplish it, notwithstanding many obstacles which for years opposed his progress.

He was a native of Virginia, and was born in the county of Caroline, on the 17th of May, 1741. He was the only child of Moses Penn, who seems to have regarded his welfare almost with indifference. For at the age of eighteen years, he had been furnished with but two or three years instruction in a common country school, whence he could have derived but small advantages. At that age, he lost his father by death. He industriously improved that very slight opportunity, to obtain what little knowledge it could furnish, which must have been very small.

His father left him a competent property, though not large, of which he became at that youthful period of life, the sole guardian and manager. The comparative obscurity of his early life, was in one respect favorable. It had preserved him from those dangerous associations, and contaminating examples which are numerous, and by which many unprotected youths are ensnared, and enticed to their ruin. But Mr. Penn possessed a mind which was disposed to avoid, and capable of resisting the dangerous allurements of youth, and of fixing on a course both discreet and honorable, and promising an auspicious result.

He was a relative of the celebrated Edmund Pendleton, one of the distinguished Virginia patriots, and fellow laborer with Messrs. Lee, Henry, Randolph, Wythe, &c. and young Penn availed himself of the use of his library, kindly tendered to him by its generous owner. He resided near to his kinsman, and taking advantage of his kindness, which gave him access to his books, he industriously applied himself to improve the privilege by intense application. Mr. Penn thus situated, formed the resolution of qualifying himself for practising law. He immediately set about effecting his pur-

pose, with no other guide but his own judgment, and with only the very limited preparatory education we have mentioned.

At twenty-one years of age, he was admitted to the bar, in the county where he resided; and by close application, and native powers of eloquence, he soon rose to eminence. His eloquence was of that attractive kind, to which auditors always listen with peculiar satisfaction. He could enlist the tender feelings in his favor, and bear them along to a successful issue of the cause in which he was engaged.

In 1774, he removed to North Carolina, and entered on his professional business in that province. There the same distinction attended him which he had attained in Virginia.

We may be assured that his reputation as a politician and a patriot, had become extensively known, from the fact, that in less than two years after his settlement in that province, he was elected a delegate to congress, among those early worthies, to whom the management of the important interests of the country was committed. He took his seat on the twelfth day of October, 1775, as a delegate for North Carolina; and in the following year, met the crisis which severed the colonies forever from the mother country, and gave them a rank among the independent nations of the world. He was returned to a seat in congress annually during the three following years; and like the other members of that assembly, he faithfully and with promptitude, industriously performed the numerous duties which were devolved on him, during that long and gloomy period of the revolutionary conflict.

At the time when Lord Cornwallis was directing his march from Camden, in South Carolina, at the head of a victorious army, North Carolina, almost defenceless, was the object of his invasion and ravages. In that situation the confidence reposed in Mr. Penn was almost unlimited. Cornwallis had entered the western part of the state, and it was almost destitute of all the necessary means of defence. The eyes of the community were turned in this emergency, on Mr. Penn; and he was invested with a power but little short of that of a dictator. This power, so dangerous in all situations to be intrusted to any man, as history abundantly testifies, he used, and applied to the pressing situation of the state, without abusing it, and for the great benefit of the commonwealth. He sustained the trial, performed the requisite duties of his appointment, received the approbation of the state, and acquired additional honor to himself.

Previous to the termination of the war of the revolution, Mr. Penn had relinquished public employment, and retired to the enjoyment of domestic life.

In 1784, he was appointed receiver of taxes for North Carolina, by Robert Morris, the celebrated financier of the United States. It was an unpopular and an unwelcome office. It was one of high trust and honor. But the incumbents in the several states, suffered more obloquy and reproach from the peculiar state of the times, and the empoverished condition of the inhabitants, than all the honors and emoluments of the office were worth. With feelings the most patriotic, the most sincere desires to be useful to the country on the one hand ; on the other, a conviction derived from experience, that he could effect little by retaining his office, and that he must continue to suffer much in his feelings, he resigned his office, which was proved to be alike destitute of profit to the public and himself. He held it but a few weeks.

He died in 1788, in the month of September, in the forty-seventh year of his age. He was married in July, 1763, to Miss Susan Lyme, by whom he had three children ; one only of whom became the head of a family. The others died in single life.

Such was the character of another of the revolutionary worthies, who by his own almost unassisted exertions, raised himself from obscurity to a distinguished rank among the great men of that memorable period, became qualified for extensive usefulness, and attained to high and merited honors in the commonwealth. Thus furnishing another example, well worthy of an extensive imitation.

## SOUTH CAROLINA.

## EDWARD RUTLEDGE.

EDWARD RUTLEDGE was the youngest son of Doctor John Rutledge, who emigrated from Ireland, in 1735, and settled at Charleston, South Carolina. There he pursued the practice of physic several years, till his connection by marriage with Miss Hert, put him in possession of an ample property. Mrs. Rutledge was a superior woman by nature and acquirements. By the early decease of Doctor Rutledge she was left a widow, with the charge of seven children, at the age of twenty-seven years. Edward, the youngest of the seven, was born at Charleston in November, 1740.

Of his early years but little is known; probably nothing was manifested by him, of a character to distinguish him essentially from others of his own age. He is represented as having been sprightly in his youth, of a docile and amiable disposition, and exemplary in filial affection and obedience.

Young Rutledge, at a suitable age, was committed to the tuition of a classical instructor from New Jersey. But the means of acquiring a finished classical education, not having been established at that time in the south, whatever his acquisitions were, they fell short of such as were furnished by the collegiate instructions of the northern colonies. He attained sufficient, however, to qualify him for entering on the study of law, the profession for which he had been destined by his connections.

His eldest brother, John Rutledge, was already established in the practice of law in Charleston; and was rapidly advancing to the head of the profession, at the Charleston bar. Edward at an early age was placed under him, to prepare for his own professional career. To finish the preparatory course of studies, before admission to the bar, he was in 1769, when scarcely twenty years of age, sent to England, and entered as a student at the temple. There he had opportunities for witnessing the oratorical displays and efforts of the distinguished characters of that age; among whom were Messrs.

Mansfield, Thurlow, Chatham, Dunning, Wedderburn, and Camden. These advantages were of much value to him, and industriously improved for his own advantage.

He returned to Charleston, after having spent the required term in England, and commenced practising law at that place, in 1773. In his early efforts, he received the applause of his fellow citizens; and his course, so long as he pursued it, was both flattering and prosperous. But he was not permitted to advance very far in it, before the partiality of his fellow citizens, called him from the bar, to attend to their more important interests in the general congress. His election to that assembly took place in the year 1774, when Mr. Rutledge was but twenty-five years of age. Even at that early age, he always manifested a degree of prudence, sound discretion, and decision of character, which are not often met with in so early a period of life. Though a firm whig, he was uniformly opposed to violent party measures. Although fond of popular favor and promotion, he not only would not condescend to court them, by flattering his fellow citizens, in giving his countenance to their measures, when he was persuaded they were wrong; but uniformly opposed them with boldness, although his rising hopes, and opening prospects, might become a sacrifice to their resentment. In this respect his character was put to the test, in more instances than one, in the place of his residence; and he uniformly maintained his integrity in spite of the hissings and shouting of his fellow citizens, as tokens of their disapprobation of his conduct.

For his services in the continental congress, where he had some opposition from some of his colleagues to contend with, he received the approbation of the provincial congress, in connection with his colleagues, in a formal vote of thanks, which they passed; and which was followed by a re-appointment to the same office, for the year 1775. He was again chosen for the following year; that year which will be the most memorable in the American history to the end of time.

It was a fact well understood by Mr. Rutledge, that a considerable portion of the inhabitants of South Carolina, were at least not zealous in favor of declaring the colonies independent, at the time when it began to be a subject of discussion. Some thought it premature; some, that if declared, the country could not sustain it against the power and force of Great Britain; and others, particularly the mercantile portion of the community, anticipated the total prostration of their business, for a time at least.



so decisive a measure. But Mr. Rutledge, in opposition to all these considerations, perceiving the necessity of the measure and firm in the belief of an ultimate triumph of the colonies in support of their just rights, boldly advocated its adoption; and when the time had come for a final decision, he gave his vote in its favor; and in due course, set his name to the instrument, by which the independence of his country was solemnly announced to the world.

Before this important measure was determined by congress, a resolution was introduced to that body, and adopted, recommending to the several provinces to establish permanent governments for regulating their concerns, instead of those ephemeral institutions to which the urgency of their circumstances had required them to resort for temporary purposes. This recommendation clearly and unequivocally indicated their ulterior design; and it might easily be inferred, in whom congress placed confidence, when it was ascertained whom they designated to bring it forward. On that occasion we find, that young Rutledge was associated with Richard Henry Lee and John Adams, to prepare a suitable preamble to the recommendation.

At the request of Lord Howe, that congress would depute commissioners to meet him, to consider of some proposals of the British government, ostensibly to negotiate for peace, congress appointed Mr. John Adams, Doctor Franklin, and Mr. Rutledge. It is well known that the mission was productive of no immediate consequences, that were beneficial to either party. It appeared obvious that the real object of the British was, under cover of pacific proposals, to sow the seeds of jealousy, and excite parties among the Americans. That time was embraced for this purpose, because a succession of adverse occurrences in their affairs, had caused some degree of despondency in the public feelings; and the enemy hoped that the time would prove propitious to their purposes, by inclining the timid and wavering to come forth in open opposition to the cause of American Independence.

We have no further account of Mr. Rutledge's proceedings in congress, to record in this sketch, by reason of the early determination of that body, to transact their business with closed doors. That resolution was not rescinded up to the time when ill health, and other imperative causes, compelled him to withdraw, for a period, from his public duties in that assembly. He was returned again as a delegate in 1779; but sickness, which arrested him on his way to the place of

their sessions, compelled him to return home, without even reaching the end of his journey.

From his retirement from congress in 1777, the situation of South Carolina demanded his attention, and patriotic exertions for its preservation; and eventually, for its deliverance from the possession and depredations of the enemy. During that time Mr. Rutledge was more than once found marching to attack the invading enemy. Particularly, when the British assaulted Port Royal Island, with a detachment commanded by Major Beard, Mr. Rutledge in command of an artillery company, and his colleague, Thomas Heyward, (who also signed the Declaration of Independence,) in command of another, marched to oppose them. The result was, the British were defeated, and driven from the island.

In the year 1780, while Charleston was invested by the British, Mr. Rutledge, in an attempt to succor General Lincoln, by throwing troops into the city, was taken a prisoner by the enemy, and sent afterwards to St. Augustine, in Florida. He was detained there nearly a year, in company with some others of his fellow citizens, who were considered as too dangerous rebels to be intrusted with a station less remote from their homes. After having been exchanged, he returned to Philadelphia; and spent about six months at a moderate distance from that city, with the two General Pinckneys, his friends, who were, at that time, both of them prisoners to the British. He embraced the first opportunity to return to the south, of which the situation of that country admitted. At that time the forces under Generals Greene, Sumpter, and Marion, were beginning to encounter the enemy with some success, and reanimated the desponding hopes of the inhabitants.

After the British forces evacuated Charleston, Mr. Rutledge returned to his native residence, and mingled his congratulations with his relatives and friends. Among them he found his mother, who had suffered some persecutions by the foe, during the time they held possession of that country. They considered her talents as qualifying her to become a dangerous enemy; and to guard themselves against any evils she might assist in bringing on them, the commander of the forces at Charleston ordered her to be removed from her country residence into the city, where she would be more particularly under his eye, than in the country.

After his return to Charleston, on its having been evacuated by the enemy, he entered into the practise of law,

in which he passed about seventeen years ; dividing his time between the prosecution of his professional duties at the bar, and his legislative service under the state government. In the legislature of the state he was a leading, active, and influential member. But though his services were usefully and faithfully rendered, during that length of time, yet, in a course of duties so uniform, where there was little to occupy his time, and engage his attention, few remarkable occurrences took place, adapted to give a variety to his history, or to impress it with a character peculiarly interesting to posterity. Widows and orphans, and the fatherless, often reaped the benefits of his gratuitous services in his profession ; and the indigent were almost daily "made to feel gladness of heart," by his charity and beneficence.

After the war of the revolution was ended, many of the gentlemen having suffered materially during its progress, by British depredations on one portion of their property, (their slaves,) and having been otherwise greatly impoverished, had become deeply involved in debt. Several expedients were proposed in the legislature, for their relief against a ruinous pressure for payment. Among them was a proposal for introducing slaves from abroad, to supply the places of those who had been carried off by the enemy. Against every effort of that nature, he uniformly and stedfastly exerted himself. He never would consent to extend, or in any way increase the evil of slavery ; an evil of fearful magnitude, entailed on them by their British ancestors, and for which no effectual remedy could be devised.

On the commencement of hostilities between the French republic and Great Britain, in common with a vast majority of the people of the United States, he was an enthusiastic well-wisher to the success of the former. This was, however, at a time when the real designs of the French rulers and leading men had not been fully developed. In this country it was generally believed that they were, in good faith, seeking to rescue their liberties from the grasp of despotic rulers ; and many of their extravagances were palliated and excused for that reason. Mr. Rutledge, still feeling the smarting of those many wounds inflicted on him and his country by the British ; and remembering the aid furnished to us by the French government, very naturally had his feelings strongly enlisted in behalf of the one, and against the other.

It was probably a fact, that his popularity in his native state was so general among the citizens, that had he conde

scended to solicit office for himself, there was none in the gift of the people, which he might not have had at any time. He accepted the office of colonel of a regiment of artillery, when the battalion in which he had long served was constituted a regiment. When General Charles C. Pinckney retired from his seat in the United States senate, Mr. Rutledge was appointed his successor.

He retired from the practice of law, in 1798, and was chosen governor of the state. But the career of his services and of his life was terminated by death, before one half of his official term had elapsed. He had suffered previously to the last attack, under which he sank, by repeated paroxysms of an hereditary gout; and his constitution, never vigorous, had become considerably enfeebled. He was much debilitated during the session of the legislature in Columbia; and on his return to Charleston, he suffered from exposure to the weather, which at that time was inclement and severe. But he reached home; and after languishing for a short time, he expired on the 23d day of January, 1800, in the 60th year of his age, much and justly lamented by the citizens of his native state.

Mr. Rutledge was twice married. His first marriage was with Harriet Middleton, daughter of Henry Middleton, Esq. who was colleague with him in congress, when the great question of the declaring independence was decided. By her he had one son, now Major Henry M. Rutledge of Tennessee; and one daughter, who resides at Charleston. After her decease, at a suitable time, he was married to Mary Shubrick, daughter of Thomas Shubrick, Esq.; and at that time, widow of Nicholas Eveleigh, Esq. formerly comptroller of the United States treasury, appointed to that office by General Washington.



### THOMAS HEYWARD.

THOMAS HEYWARD was the eldest son of Colonel Daniel Heyward, one of the wealthiest planters in South Carolina. He was born in St. Luke's parish, in the year 1746. Although his father had accumulated a large fortune, and like many others, in similar circumstances, he was not

his feelings with a consciousness of being able to leave his children in a state of affluence, he did not rest contented in that situation. His views, with reference to their future respectability and usefulness, went far beyond leaving them in possession of a pecuniary competence. He justly realized the importance of cultivating their minds, and enlarging their sphere of usefulness, by furnishing them with a liberal education ; and being amply furnished with the pecuniary means requisite for accomplishing that object, at a suitable age, he placed this son in the best classical school in the province of South Carolina. His proficiency was honorable to his youth ; and even then evinced his purpose of accomplishing something beyond acquiring such a measure of education, as would qualify him to sustain that rank in the community, which his wealth would authorize him to assume. He applied himself with a becoming assiduity to the study of the Latin tongue, and readily became such a proficient in it, that he read the Roman historians and poets in the original language ; and thus imbibed that love of liberty, which every where pervades their publications.

On taking leave of his school, he entered on the study of law, under the instruction of Mr. Parsons, a barrister of some eminence in that region.

It was customary in the south at that period of their history, for gentlemen to send their sons to England, to finish their education. In conformity to that custom, Colonel Heyward sent this son to London, and he was entered in one of the inns of court. There he prosecuted his studies with a diligence and fidelity, which would have been honorable to a man, who must depend for his support on his professional success and prosperity ; and it was much more characteristic of such an one, than of an heir to an independent property, who was under no necessity of making personal exertions for his support. His views were elevated far above that moderate level, on which many expectants of wealth seem willing to stand, contented only with being thought by others to be gentlemen. The value of money in his estimation was enhanced, as it became a means of qualifying its possessor to be useful. While residing in England, he was more and more impressed with the difference made between Englishmen at home, and Englishmen in the colonies. It appeared to be a part of the system among the native born subjects when any of the young colonists went to England to finish their professional education, to impress them with the idea, that

they were Englishmen only in a subordinate degree. The practice of the government was in conformity to this idea. All honorable and lucrative offices in the colonies were given to the native born English; and those involving drudgery, but yielding small compensation, were given to those of transatlantic birth. The evidences of this practice, which he continually had placed before him, and many of which he experienced, in circumstances mortifying to his feelings, served to alienate his affections from the parent state, and confirmed his anticipations of the treatment the colonists were to receive from the native English, in their official and individual acts. However unfavorably predisposed Mr. Heyward may have been before he left his native shores, when he returned to his home, he was ready to unite with others in resisting those claims of the British, which he deemed unjust in their nature, and oppressive and unequal in their operation on the colonial subjects of the same government.

After Mr. Heyward had completed his course in England, he visited several countries on the European continent, with a view to his own advantage. In his tour he spent several years, carefully observing all that presented for his observation, with the impartial feelings of a philanthropist, and a philosopher. The splendor, the pomp, the showy display, the glittering equipage, the pride and haughtiness in the aristocratic ranks, the abject condition, the wretched pauperism, and the general degradation, pervading the plebian race, presented a contrast to the moderate fortune, the industry, the simple style of living, the absence of extreme indigence, the general equality in rank, and the contentment which he had seen in America, strengthened his prepossessions in behalf of his native country, and bound his affections to her interests and institutions more strongly than ever. In his travels, he saw little to excite envy, but much to regret and deplore.

With such views and feelings, Mr. Heyward returned from Europe, uncontaminated by what he had seen and experienced, in the old and corrupt countries he had visited, and free from the fashionable vices of men, whose influence and example are too often considered as sanctioning similar practices, by those whose moral principles hang loosely about them. Soon after his return, he entered upon the practice of law. Shortly after commencing his professional labors, he was ~~settled in partnership with~~ Miss Mathews; a lady possessed of ~~an elegant and liberal~~ and mental, which entitled her to

his affections, and fitted her to cherish and gratify his amiable disposition, and constitute home the beloved retreat from the toils and perplexities of his intercourse with men.

Mr. Heyward well knew what sacrifices would be required of the American colonies, by the parent government, as the only peace-offering which that power would consent to receive, for effecting a reconciliation of the jarring interests then existing between them. He was too much enlightened, and too patriotic, to consent to the sacrifice; nor would he condescend to calculate the personal advantages he might derive, by pleading for a reconciliation on such terms as would be acceptable to Great Britain, when he well knew the degrading condition in which such a reconciliation would place his country.

Mr. Heyward, having taken his stand thus openly among his fellow citizens, relative to the controversy, which had already become an interesting subject to the community, he became very popular with his fellow citizens. They immediately selected him for one of their leaders, to show them what measures to adopt, and to go before them in the execution of those measures. For this, his superior education, his warm patriotism, and his mild and amiable temper, well qualified him. The people elected him to the first revolutionary assembly that was convened in the province. Soon after he was placed on "the committee or council of safety;" a body of men furnished with almost unrestricted authority, and empowered to exercise it in a manner wholly discretionary.

In 1775, he was elected a delegate to the general congress to supply a vacancy occasioned by a recal of one of their representatives, who, with another member, had returned to aid in defending the province against an expected invasion. At first, his modesty induced him to decline the appointment; but at length, consulting the desires of his constituents, which were communicated to him by a special deputation, he yielded to their wishes, and consented to take his seat. This brought him into congress in season to listen to the discussions on the proposed Declaration of Independence. He had been, a considerable time, persuaded that it must come to that issue; and soon after his arrival in that assembly, he was persuaded that the time for adopting the measure had arrived; and for its immediate adoption, congress found in him a ready and cordial advocate.

As Mr. Heyward's fortune placed him above pecuniary considerations in accepting office, his undertaking to discharge the duties of such as exposed him to severe retaliation.

tion, and to experiencing the vengeance of the enemy, if they could get him into their power, must be ascribed to high and honorable motives. Such was especially the case, when in 1778, he accepted a seat on the bench of the criminal and civil courts, under the new government. The controversy was not yet settled so far, as to give assurance that a judge might not be arraigned before a court constituted by another government; and be convicted and punished as a traitor, for faithfully discharging his duty to the power by which he had been appointed. In South Carolina, the office was attended with not a little danger at that period. The British lay in the vicinity of Charleston, at the very time he presided at the trial of some persons, charged as traitors, for holding a correspondence with the enemy. They were convicted, and their execution took place in view of the British lines. In consequence he became peculiarly obnoxious to the British; and when Charleston capitulated, it was thought he was intended to be excluded from the conditions of the capitulation. One article was inserted in the terms, which was supposed, by his friends, was aimed at him as a victim to the manes of those who had suffered under his sentence; but he was not demanded.

He held a military commission at the same time he was a judge of the court; and was in active service in the affair at Beaufort. He commanded a company of the battalion of artillery, which, from the fact that it was raised during the administration of Governor Littleton, was styled the "Charleston Ancient Battalion of Artillery." Heyward and Rutledge were here placed side by side; both in a similar command; and both delegates to that congress, in which they concurred in voting and signing the declaration of their country's independence.

In the engagement that took place, Mr. Heyward received a gunshot wound; the mark of which, as an honorable testimony of his devoted patriotism, he carried through life. Although the victory at that time was on the side of the Americans, yet the town was destined to fall; and then, Heyward and Rutledge, with others, were made prisoners. As being peculiarly obnoxious to the enemy, they were sent to St. Augustine, in Florida, then in possession of the British. After some time they were sent to Philadelphia. But while he was confined in St. Augustine, a detachment of the enemy went from the place of his imprisonment, to his plantation, and seized all his slaves; whom they conveyed to Jamaica, to



cultivate the sugar plantations in that island. Some of them were afterwards reclaimed; but about one hundred and thirty of them were never restored.

It was not until after they reached Philadelphia, that they were informed of the gratifying fact, that the state of South Carolina was reconquered, and delivered from the enemy. On their passage from St. Augustine, Mr. Heyward barely escaped from a watery grave. He by some means fell over board, but happily getting hold of the ship's rudder, he clung to it until taken up, and restored to safety on deck. But in the midst of all these trials, he was visited by an affliction still more distressing. The beloved wife of his affections, and mother of his children, was called away by death. But amidst all his afflictions, he sustained his serenity with that meekness and acquiescence to the will of the Most High, which was exemplary, and becoming the character he had uniformly maintained.

On his return to Carolina, though somewhat depressed in his spirits, by the repeated calamities he had experienced, and the numerous adversities he had sustained, he gradually rose out of that state of mind, and recovered his tranquillity while discharging his public duties. He resumed his seat on the bench, and acted as a judge, until 1798. In 1790, he was appointed a member of a convention for framing a constitution for his native state. In 1791, he withdrew from the arduous duties of public life, and retired to domestic enjoyment in his own endeared family.

By a second marriage with Miss E. Savage, he enjoyed the consolation derived from a virtuous and useful life, and a tranquil old age. The fruits of his second marriage were three children. After having taken an active and highly responsible part in the revolutionary contest; after having suffered in his person and estate, by the hand of the enemy; having seen his native state conquered, and re-conquered; having united in declaring his country an independent nation, and seen it acknowledged as such, by the power from which it was severed; having lived to see it settled under one general confederated constitution of government, and witnessed it advancing, with unequalled rapidity in population, prosperity, and wealth; he died in peace, at his own country seat, in the midst of his estimable family, in March, 1809, at the age of sixty-three years.

## THOMAS LYNCH, JUN.

THE course of this gentleman, as will be seen in the following memoir, however brilliant in prospect, was brief in its duration, and deeply melancholy in its end. Born an heir to an ample fortune, the only son of an indulgent father, possessing native intellectual powers of no common order, and furnished with all the necessary means for obtaining a finished education of the first class, which the venerable universities of Oxford or Cambridge could supply; and imbued with an ardent desire to improve his advantages in the best possible manner; his prospects for future life were brilliant, and flattering to an extent rarely allotted to man.

Thomas Lynch, Jun. was descended from an ancient Austrian family, which resided in the town of Lintz. One branch of the family left their native residence in Germany, and removed to England. They settled in the county of Kent, and from thence emigrated to Connaught, in Ireland.

The great grandfather of Thomas Lynch, Jun. left Ireland, and came to South Carolina, a short time after the settlement of that colony commenced. His youngest son, whose name was Thomas, was grandfather of Thomas Lynch, Jun. the subject of this brief sketch. He was evidently a man of sagacity, as well as of enterprise. He inherited but a slender fortune from his father. But for that deficiency he made ample provision, by improving the means in his power. He traversed the then wilderness, and examined the unsettled lands; and located various tracts of the most valuable in his estimation, although they were by others, at that time, considered as but little better than worthless. He took out grants for large tracts of those lands; and, by means of that wise speculation left at his decease an immense estate to the father of Thomas Lynch, Jun.

Thomas Lynch, the elder as he was called by way of distinction, was a very estimable man, and a zealous, warm-hearted, public spirited promoter of good objects. He was early brought into public life; and with a feeling of ardent patriotism, he espoused the colonial cause, in opposition to the claims of the British ministry, which they attempted to establish over the inhabitants of the American provinces. He was appointed a delegate to the first general congress

which met at Philadelphia : and was re-elected, and continued a member from South Carolina until his death.

He was *thought* fond of his only son : and possessing both the means and disposition to furnish him with a first rate education, he sent him, at the early age of thirteen years, to England, for that purpose.

Having made these observations relative to Thomas Lynch, the father, whose history is intimately connected with that of the son, we now resume the subject of the latter.

Thomas Lynch, Jun. was born at his father's residence, which was at his plantation on the North Santee River, in Prince George's parish, in South Carolina, on the fifth day of August, 1740. On the side of his mother, he was connected with the Alston family, which had many years been among the most distinguished in that state. In pursuance of his design to educate his son, so soon as he reached an age which would justify the step, his father sent him to an academical school at Georgetown, in that province, called the "Indigo Society School." His early advantages there, were the best that the colony furnished ; and they seem to have been very respectable. Young Lynch, at a very early period of life, while in that seminary, evinced a capacity for literary attainments, very pleasing to parental hopes, and flattering to his fond father's anticipations. By reason of his mother's early decease, he was deprived of the many nameless, though invaluable benefits, which are the happy fruits of maternal affection and fidelity to infant offspring. He was possessed of an amiable and ingenuous disposition ; and probably the loss he sustained in that particular, was in a great degree compensated by the judicious vigilance of his father ; for he was always docile, cheerfully complying with the wishes of his beloved parent, and manifesting an affectionate and filial deportment towards him.

After spending some time in that school, his father took him away, and sent him to England, even before he had completed his thirteenth year ; and on his arrival in that country, he was placed at Eton, a school much celebrated as well known, for having been the seminary in which a large number of eminent statesmen, and literary characters, received a portion of their education, during a long succession of years. Having, at Eton school, attained the prerequisite qualifications, he was removed thence to the university of Cambridge ; where in due season he took his degrees. In regard to his conduct, during his residence at that distinguished sea

of learning, it is only known generally, that by his assiduous application, virtuous life, and acquisitions of science, he secured the esteem and consideration of his contemporary candidates for literary distinction.

It was one part of the plan which Mr. Lynch had sketched out for his son, that he should, after completing his course at the university, enter his name at the Temple, to prosecute a regular course of legal studies, that he might be qualified for his future pursuits in public life. The ample fortune he was able to bestow on his son, precluded every necessity of his son's being influenced by motives of a pecuniary kind. He wished him to return to his native home, in possession of every qualification and attainment, requisite to make him "a finished man." He felt an anxious desire to have him an able lawyer, that he might exercise his profession *gratuitously*, in defending and protecting those cases of innocence, truth, and justice, which occasionally come before judicial tribunals, connected with persons who are unfurnished with the means of securing such professional aid, as the security of their just rights and interests demand. It was for the benefit of such people, that Mr. Lynch benevolently desired his son might become qualified, as an able counsellor and advocate. He wished he might be a learned man, in the broad meaning of the terms; not a scholar merely—but that, in the exercise of a profession, he might actively dedicate and appropriate his learning and talents, in a disinterested manner, for the benefit of his fellow men. He contemplated with fond anticipation, the approach of that period, when he might behold him stepping forth the champion of innocence and misfortune.

Although young Lynch seems never to have been partial to the study of law, yet his ever prevailing desire to gratify his father, induced him readily to comply with his wishes in this particular instance; and he cheerfully entered upon the pursuit. This measure placed him in a situation to learn the views and disposition of many distinguished men in London, relative to the course of the ministry respecting the American colonies; and thus to prepare his own mind for adopting the principles which he afterwards espoused, and for pursuing the course which they indicated. But as the evidences of an approaching contest, between the parent government and her colonies multiplied, he was anxious to quit the irksome labors of pouring over black letter law books, he urgently solicited his father to permit him to return to his na-

ternal residence. Having at length obtained his consent, he set sail for South Carolina. This event, so naturally grateful to the father and the son, occurred about the year 1772, when he was twenty-one years of age, and after a separation of eight years. The relative condition of Great Britain and her colonies, having greatly changed since Mr. Lynch formed his plans for the future course of his son, he was easily persuaded by the latter, soon after his return, to relinquish his previous desire to have him pursue the practice of his profession; and to take early measures for having him introduced into public life without delay. With a view to this, and to produce a consciousness that he had a real and important interest in the cause of his country, which was to meet its fate, according to the issue of the approaching contest, he gave him a large and valuable plantation.

Soon after this occurrence, he consummated by marriage, an attachment which was mutually formed even in childhood, with Miss Elizabeth Shubrick; a beautiful young woman, in the possession of whom, as the beloved companion of his future life, every desire of his heart respecting domestic enjoyment, was fully gratified.

All the agreeable circumstances, necessary to insure the domestic felicity and public prosperity of Mr. Lynch, seemed to conspire for his utmost gratification. Accomplished as a scholar, and polished as a gentleman, he was received as a favorite by all his acquaintance in their social circles; and looked to by the community as a worthy associate of his highly respected father, in vindicating and managing their public concerns.

The first exhibition of his talents was given at a town meeting in Charleston, soon after his return from England, called for the purpose of considering the injuries which Great Britain was inflicting on the colonies. In his address, on that occasion, he acquitted himself so honorably, and so fully to the acceptance of the numerous audience assembled on the occasion, that their favor and confidence were voluntarily bestowed on him from that moment. From that time he was the favorite of the public in that district; and any honor for which he consented to become a candidate, was conferred on him almost by acclamation.

Mr. Lynch was offered a captain's commission in the first provincial regiment of troops, which was raised in South Carolina, for the continental service—this was in 1775. He accepted that appointment somewhat in opposition to the

wishes of his father, who was at the time attending congress, in Philadelphia. He was desirous that his son should enter the service, with a higher commission than the one offered him, and wished him to proceed to Philadelphia, where he supposed one might be obtained for him. But the son thought, and so expressed himself to his father with a becoming modesty, that his present commission was quite equal to his experience in military science.

General Charles C. Pinckney was at that time a captain in the same regiment, and he and Mr. Lynch went forth together on the recruiting service, into North Carolina, to raise each the company which he was to command. The success of their enterprise was answerable to their wishes; for in a few weeks each recruited the number of men necessary to complete his company. But this excursion, though honorable and successful, was the immediate cause of serious evils to Mr. Lynch, which much impaired his health and prepared the way for his premature death. The exposures always incident to such a service in every situation, were connected with aggravated evils in the part of North Carolina where he was employed. His health sustained injury before he set out on his return homeward; and on his way to Charleston he was attacked with a bilious fever, incident to that region, which contributed its influence to such a degree, that he never was able to divest himself of its effects. The consequences was, that he continued an invalid during the short remainder of his life. Although thus debilitated, he joined his regiment in the latter part of that year; but was not suffered to remain in connection with his command but a short season, before the superior claims of filial piety and duty imperiously called him to repair to Philadelphia. He had been with his regiment but a few days, before he received intelligence of an extreme illness which afflicted his father in that city. This melancholy information, was accompanied with the intelligence that his father had resigned his seat in congress, because of his inability to perform the duties which it required. Under these trying circumstances, his own bodily infirmity, and the claims on his filial duty to his afflicted parent, he met with serious difficulty in obtaining a furlough for the purpose of discharging those obligations, from the fastidiousness of his commanding officer. Colonel Gadsden absolutely refused to grant his request, on this plausible ground—that no consideration of a private nature should be suffered to interfere with public duty. ~~It is not known whether this has been the result in that instance is not known.~~

for on receiving the resignation of the father, of his seat in congress, the provincial assembly immediately appointed the son to fill the vacancy ; and that, by an unanimous vote. This superseding his military commission, relieved him from his embarrassment, arising from his connection with Colonel Gadsden's command. And it was an honorable mark of the high esteem and consideration, in which his talents were generally held. He was at that time but twenty-seven years of age.

Mr. Lynch, urged by the twofold call of duty to his suffering parent, and to his country, hastened his journey to Philadelphia, the theatre of his services. He joined congress in 1776, and attended in his seat among those who were his seniors in years, and in the business of legislation. While he was not unmindful of the obligations due to the public, he attended with filial piety and affection, to the claims which his parent held on his kindness and gratitude.

As his father remained in Philadelphia a short time after his arrival, he was allowed the privilege of being present at the discussions on the subject of independence ; and when the great question was decided, to sanction by his vote and signature, the act by which a nation emerged from its colonial condition, and assumed that of an independent nation.

This was one of the last acts of his political life. But this has given the impression of immortality to his name.

His health was feeble when he left home for Philadelphia. During the short time he resided there, it became much more so. The decline from that time forward, was rapid and alarming. Such being the condition of both the father and son, the two invalids entered on their journey to South Carolina. But the providence of God had determined that the father should close his journey of life, during his slow progress towards his residence. "He was no more to return to his house, neither was his place to know him any more." They proceeded slowly as far as Annapolis, where a second paralytic attack terminated the father's life, and the affectionate efforts of the son, to lengthen out his valuable life, and alleviate his bodily sufferings.

Mr. Lynch having performed the last acts of filial duty to his parent, now returned to his home, with the hope, by care and attention, and with the aid of medical skill, to eradicate the seeds of disease, which were sown deep in his constitution, while he was engaged in the military service in North Carolina. But these had quickened and taken so firm a root, that

every effort was found unavailing. Not unfrequently, he was confined in a helpless condition by severe rheumatism; such as not unfrequently follows an ill treated bilious fever.

His anxious friends and connections, with the strongest solicitude, were constrained to witness, without the ability to prevent his rapid progress in decline. By the advice of his medical attendants, it was determined that he should attempt a voyage to the south of Europe, believing that a change of climate, if he could sustain the fatigues of a voyage, held forth the only hope of a restoration. The dangers attendant on pursuing a direct voyage in an American ship, were too imminent to render such a course expedient. He therefore embarked for St. Eustatia, with an expectation of finding there, some neutral vessel, in which the voyage might be safely undertaken. He accordingly sailed for that port near the close of 1779, in a ship commanded by Captain Morgan, accompanied by his amiable wife, the endeared partner of his joys, and the sympathizing companion, and participator in all his sorrows and afflictions. The rest is soon told. They were never seen more. No certain information concerning the fate of the ship was ever obtained. She probably foundered at sea, and all on board perished. With them, Mr. Lynch, and his amiable wife, found a watery grave. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."



### ARTHUR MIDDLETON.

ARTHUR MIDDLETON, the son of Henry Middleton, a wealthy planter in South Carolina, was born in 1743, in Middleton Place, a name given it by the family, who first settled in south Carolina.

At an early age he was sent to England for his education. His first station was the school at Hackney, in which several of the members of the early congress from the south received their preparatory instruction to fit them for the university. After spending the necessary term in that school, with exemplary application, he was transferred at fourteen years of age to a school in Westminster. Here he remained four years, and then entered the



Although amply supplied by his father with the means of indulging in the dissipated habits of the gay, he rather chose to attend to his studies, and preserve a moral and sober deportment; shunning those places where the young and thoughtless are but too easily allured, and often ensnared to their ruin. After spending four years there, with much credit to himself, he took his degree in the twenty-second year of his age. He left that seminary with a good reputation, as a sound scholar, and a man of correct morals. He spent some time after this, in visiting various places in England, and in reviving and strengthening the feelings of affectionate attachment, which had subsisted from the beginning, between the branch which had emigrated to America, and those who remained in England. From thence he passed over to the continent, and commenced a tour in Europe. In this tour, which was principally in the southern parts of Europe, he spent nearly two years. In this time, he passed several months in Rome, improving his mind by studying the fine arts, for which he had a relish, and in which he became somewhat of a proficient. He then returned to South Carolina and was soon married to Miss Izard.

About a year after his marriage, he embarked for Europe with his young wife, whom he resolved to gratify with an opportunity to see England, and an excursion on the continent. In this tour he visited several of the most celebrated places in France and Spain. Having gratified her with a view of foreign countries and customs, they returned again to his native place in 1773, and took the family seat for their residence, which his indulgent father gave up to his favored son. There, in possession of wealth, he had as fair a prospect as could open to the young mind, of enjoying every satisfaction that this world can furnish; but this prospect scarcely opened to his view before it began to be overcast.

In 1774, the cloud began to collect, indicating the storm which in the year following burst on New England, and agitated the whole of the North American colonies. The time had now arrived when it became necessary for men to declare themselves openly. Neutrality was inadmissible. In this time Henry and Arthur Middleton, father and son, with nothing to gain for themselves should the cause of the colonies succeed, and much to lose if it failed, without hesitation decided for their country; and stepping forth boldly, put on the badge of independence.

From this time Arthur Middleton was actively employed in

various ways, in promoting the cause of the colonies, which had become both interesting and critical. He entertained no half-way measures, but took a firm and decided stand in opposition to British encroachment and oppression.

He was a member of various committees, which were intrusted with great powers; and who enjoined to "Take care that the republic receive no detriment." He was in April, 1775, appointed with four others a committee, to place the colony in a state of safety against its enemies. They took possession of the public magazine of arms and ammunition, and removed them from the custody of the officer having them under his charge, and appropriated them to the use of the colony.

In June following, he was appointed one of a large committee, by the provincial congress of South Carolina, to watch over, and take such measures as they might deem necessary, in that trying emergency, for the public safety. Of that committee he was an active and leading member. Afterwards, when Lord William Campbell was appointed governor of South Carolina, although he was nearly connected by marriage with Mrs. Middleton, and it was discovered that he was playing a double game with the members of the provincial congress, Mr. Middleton, waving the influence of family connection, at the hazard of a friendly intercourse which then subsisted between his family and the governor's, proposed that he should immediately be arrested, and taken into custody. This, though it was overruled by a majority of the committee, less decided than he, was undoubtedly a wise and politic proposal; and had it been carried into execution, it would probably have saved South Carolina from much trouble which was shortly afterwards endured, by reason of Lord Campbell's fleeing, and returning with an armed force, under Sir Henry Clinton and Sir P. Parker, to invade and ravage their coasts.

Mr. Middleton was chosen one of a committee of eleven, to devise a form of government for South Carolina, during the contest with Great Britain. This was in the winter of 1776. In a short time he was chosen one of the representatives for South Carolina, in the congress of the nation, then in session at Philadelphia. This was the congress which declared independence, for which Mr. Middleton voted, and to the declaration of which he set his hand, with a prospect of sacrificing large possessions, an estimable family, and even life

itself, should the contest terminate unsuccessfully for his country.

He continued a member of congress, residing with his family which he took with him, until the close of 1777.

In 1778, the assembly having adopted a new constitution, in conformity to the recommendation of congress, chose Arthur Middleton their first governor under it. This was done not only without his soliciting it, but without his having even contemplated the event as possible.

But Mr. Middleton, as Mr. John Rutledge before him had done, doubted the legality of the proceedings of the legislature, which formed the constitution, and declined an acceptance of the appointment; and this he did in a manner which raised him still higher than before in popular opinion. The people approved of his motives, although they might have thought him incorrect in his judgment.

In 1779, when the British invaded the South, under General Prevost, Mr. John Rutledge having been called to the chair of state, undertook to defend Charleston against the enemy. Although Mr. Middleton's property was entirely exposed to their depredations, and without any protection, he joined the family of Governor Rutledge, and entered Charleston with the troops assembled there for its defence. He united his personal exertions with others to protect that city and had the happiness of seeing the enemy retreat, without attacking the place. In the exposed condition of his own property, he only wrote to his wife to remove his family a days journey out of the scene of immediate danger. Thus, while he exerted himself for the protection of others, he left his own property to be ravaged by an enraged foe. His loss was very great by that irruption of the British.

In the following year, he, with many other gentlemen of distinction, was taken prisoner by Sir Henry Clinton, and sent to St. Augustine as prisoners of war. Mr. Middleton was then engaged as a private soldier, in the defence of Charleston. When in the year following these prisoners were exchanged, and sent in a cartel to Philadelphia, he was appointed a representative of South Carolina in Congress. He was again elected to that office by the general assembly in 1782. This was in the beginning of the year. He continued to occupy his seat till November, and then returned to his family, from whom the vicissitudes of war, and the calls of public duty had long separated him.

The contest being now brought to a close, by the capture

of Lord Cornwallis, and the preliminaries of peace having been made known in the United States, Mr. Middleton declined serving his fellow citizens any longer in congress. He however consented to represent them in the legislature of the state, and was a very influential and highly useful member of that body, at a period when the state was much agitated by various causes which such a state of things might naturally be expected to produce. The influence of the best men the state could furnish, was needed to allay these unhappy difficulties, and restore harmony to the disturbed community. For this purpose, Mr. Middleton devoted his best efforts.

Besides his services in the legislature, he entered into no public employment, but spent his time with his family, residing principally in a country residence, a short distance from Charleston. There he received his friends with kindness, and treated them with that hospitality for which southern gentlemen have with justice been honorably distinguished. But he did not continue long to enjoy the blessings of peace and civil liberty, for the attainment of which he had made so many sacrifices.

In the autumn of 1787, he contracted an intermitting fever, by incautiously exposing himself. This he left to commit its ravages on his constitution, thinking that "the power of nature" was adequate for affording relief. He neglected to call for medical aid until his health was so far undermined, that when it was applied, it came too late to furnish relief. He died on the first of January, 1788, about fifty-five years of age.

Mr. Middleton, at his death, left a wife and eight children; two sons, and six daughters. Mrs. Middleton survived him until 1814, retaining that rank and esteem in the most polished society, to which she was well entitled. Henry, one of his sons, after having been governor of the state, and a member of the house of representatives in congress, was appointed minister to the court of Russia.

**GEORGIA.****BUTTON GWINNETT**

**BUTTON GWINNETT** was born in England, about the year 1752. His parents were respectable, and though their pecuniary circumstances were moderate, they gave him the means of obtaining an excellent education. He first commenced business as a merchant in Bristol. Soon after his marriage, he resolved to move to America; and in the year 1770, he embarked with his family, and arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, where he engaged in trade, and pursued it for two years. He then disposed of his stock in trade; and vested the proceeds in a number of slaves, and a tract of land on St. Catharine's Island, in Georgia. Thither he removed, and devoted his attention to agriculture.

We possess no means of knowing the history of Mr. Gwinnett's early life. It is probable, however, that it was distinguished by nothing very remarkable. He is said to have early favored the cause of the colonies, in opposition to the claims of the parliament; and this may have been one motive for his leaving England, and emigrating to America. But at the time of his settling in Georgia, he found the public feeling generally, of such an indecisive character, as induced him to pursue a cautious line of conduct, surrounded as he was by a large proportion of the men of influence, who were slow in their determination to oppose the British, and espouse the cause of the American colonies. To this general manifestation of cautious decision, which powerfully influenced the political movements of Georgia, there were some exceptions.

Mr. Gwinnett's anticipations of a favorable result of the contest between the colonies and Great Britain, were, like those of many other sincere friends to their cause, through the country, not very sanguine. His were not based on any latent affection for his native country; nor were they influenced by that indecision, then so prevalent in Georgia, but by

a mistaken judgment, which led him to form conclusions contrary to his wishes. About this time he became intimate with one of those men, who was early decided, and openly declared his sentiments in favor of the colonies, and who was an enthusiastic partizan in their favor. The frequent discussions which took place, respecting the subject, and the probability of a successful resistance of the British power, between him and Doctor Lyman Hall, (who was the person referred to,) served to obviate his fears, and to bring him forward, to lend his whole powers in a decided hostility to the British, and to a vigorous support of the colonies. This open and decided manifestation of his feelings, in vindication and support of the cause of his adopted country, together with a well cultivated mind, and talents highly respectable, rendered him conspicuous and popular, especially among those who possessed kindred feelings with his own. The number of such was fast multiplying, although they still constituted a minority in the colony, and notwithstanding Georgia was the last of the colonies, which declared itself in opposition to the British. The active influence of those decided patriots finally prevailed, and Georgia joined the confederacy, under what was then denominated, the Standard of Rebellion. From that period, the popular favor conferred on Mr. Gwinnett, was extensive, and his rapid promotion in political life, to the first dignities in the province, indirectly prepared the way for his sudden precipitation from his elevated station, to the rank of a private citizen; and a mortified pride, and feelings or resentment towards the instruments of his humiliation spurred him onward to that step which at once closed his career in politics, and with it his life. His sun rose suddenly—its course to the zenith was rapid and brilliant—its descent was hurried and ominous of evil—and it sat in blood!

In deciding on the apparent lukewarmness of Mr. Gwinnett, relative to the American cause, which for a time marked his political conduct, we should recollect that his property, lying in an indefensible situation, was exposed to become a sure sacrifice, should an invasion ensue, and that was a certain consequence of the commencement of open hostilities. This must be admitted as a powerful motive to operate on the feelings, and regulate the conduct of men. It could neither be removed to a place of security, nor protected as it lay. And it was in fact, totally destroyed by the British. The decided part which he did take, therefore, furnished a strong testimony to the purity of his patriotism.

In the beginning of 1775, Mr. Gwinnett openly espoused the cause of America, and took a part with the colonies. No part of Georgia had at that time been represented in the continental congress, except the parish of St. John. This had previously separated from the province, and had appointed a representative for that district. Here the patriotism of Georgia seems to have concentrated ; and slowly to have diffused itself into other more remote parts of the colony, with rather a dilatory progress.

● Mr. Gwinnett having attracted the attention of that community to himself, and become popular, by the spirited manner in which he espoused the cause of his adopted country, he was appointed a representative in congress by the general assembly, in February, 1776. His colleagues appointed at the same time, were his early friend Doctor Lyman Hall, Archibald Bullock, George Houston, and George Walton. There was one member, that was elected the year preceding, who, when the subject of independence came to be seriously contemplated, being fixedly opposed to it, vacated his seat, and Mr. Bullock remained in Georgia after his election. These particulars will account for the fact, that there were but three of the members from Georgia, out of the six chosen, who signed the Declaration of Independence ; of whom Mr. Gwinnett was one.

In the autumn of 1776, Mr. Gwinnett was again elected, and took his seat in December, in Baltimore, whither congress had removed, to avoid some impending danger from the approach of the British forces towards Philadelphia.

In this same year, a convention was summoned, during the session of the provincial assembly, to meet early in 1777, to frame a constitution for the independent state of Georgia. Of that convention Mr. Gwinnett was a member ; and has the credit of having laid a basis, containing the great outlines of the constitution subsequently adopted by the state, as their government.

Mr. Bullock, president of the provincial council, dying soon after the convention adjourned, that high and honorable office became vacant. Mr. Gwinnett was elected his successor. He had now attained the highest office, and one deemed the most honorable, within the gift of the state ; and it might have been rationally concluded, that his ambition would be contented for a short season at least ; especially as all his rapid promotions had accumulated upon him, within one year after his first appearance in public life. But it will be remembered,



that he was a "*Native Englishman*," had come into a colony, and among a people of whose real character, Englishmen knew but little; for whom they were accustomed to indulge a feeling that partook very little of respect. It is not very unnatural to conclude, that Mr. Gwinnett inherited a share of that feeling in common with his countrymen; and that he considered the honors so profusely conferred on him, as an acknowledgement by the provincials of that superiority over them, so generally claimed by his countrymen; and especially by those of inferior merits.

This rapid elevation of a foreigner, a native of the country with which the colonies were at open war, and who had resided but a few years among them, began to excite jealousies among some native citizens, who were candidates for popular favor. They felt conscious that they had equal, if not superior claims on the favor of the community, to his. This irritated a temper naturally warm and precipitate, and provoked him to resent it according to the demands of what are erroneously termed, "the laws of honor."

Not contented with having held the highest civil office in the gift of the people, he began to aspire to military promotion. While he was representing the colony in congress, he offered himself a candidate for the office of brigadier general, to take command of a brigade to be raised in Georgia, for the continental service. His competitor was Colonel M'Intosh. Mr. Gwinnett failed. The disappointment was peculiarly wounding to his feelings. Indeed, his mind does not appear to have been disciplined to sustain disappointment with equanimity. He was placed only in the sunshine of uninterrupted prosperity. From the time of that disappointment, he considered Colonel M'Intosh his personal enemy. It is probable that the colonel did not take any measures to obviate that impression, and conciliate his esteem.

The disappointment he experienced in consequence of his failure, and the success of his competitor for the commission of a brigadier general, was followed by a succession of events, which tended to aggravate, rather than sooth the wound his irritable feelings had received by that occurrence. The failure of a military enterprise in Florida which he had projected, which his rivals and their friends improved for his deeper mortification; and this happening when he was offering himself a candidate for the office of governor, together with the success of a rival, who he deemed far his inferior in capacity; all bore on his naturally jealous mind, with



unhappy, but a fatal influence. By this combination of untoward events, his aspiring hopes and anticipations were blasted, and the way was prepared for closing his short, but brilliant political career, and with it his natural life.

Among those who availed themselves of these events, to deepen the mortification, and irritate the wound Mr. Gwinnett had sustained, one of the most conspicuous was General M'Intosh, his successful rival candidate for the office of brigadier. The free remarks he made on different occasions, reflecting the reputation of Mr. Gwinnett; and the pleasure he often manifested, grounded on his humiliation, pointed him out as the first victim to his resentment. The consequence was a challenge, sent by Gwinnett, and accepted by M'Intosh. They met, fought with pistols, at the distance of twelve feet; both were wounded, and Gwinnett mortally. Thus fell, in the forty-fifth year of his age, Button Gwinnett, a victim to the laws of false honor, of mortified pride, and disappointed ambition. He left a widow and several young children behind him. But they shortly after this event, followed him to the grave.



### LYMAN HALL.

THIS gentleman was a native citizen of Connecticut, born and educated, both classically and professionally in that colony. He was born about the year 1731. After completing his classical and medical education, which was effected while comparatively quite young, he married a lady of Connecticut, and emigrated to South Carolina, in the year 1752, to pursue the business of his profession. At first he settled in Dorchester; but removed into Georgia within the first year after his arrival in South Carolina. In Georgia he established himself in the district of Medway. About forty families, originally from New England, accompanied him into that province. He settled himself in Sunbury, where, by his gentlemanly address, and amiable disposition, he obtained the confidence of the inhabitants, among whom he successfully pursued the practice of medicine until the commencement of the American revolution. His skill as a physician, strengthened and confirmed the favorable impressions which had been made on their feelings by his kindness and affability.

Doctor Hall possessed a good measure of those rational feelings, which are strikingly characteristic of the inhabitants of New England. These he cherished when in a southern climate; and the fact that he was associated with a considerable number of kindred spirits, had no tendency to diminish one of the strongest traits in the human character. Possibly it may have been owing, in a good measure, to the relative situation and character of the inhabitants, among whom he resided, that the people of St. John's Parish were so much earlier determined to make a common cause in opposing British encroachments on the rights, and liberty of the colonies, than the citizens of Georgia generally. But be this as it may, such was the fact, that while the people of Georgia in general, were indecisive, temporizing, and backward, the citizens of the parish of St. John set them an example of decision, magnanimity, and patriotism; which, though slowly, and at a considerable distance in their rear, they eventually followed, and which then presented the whole thirteen provinces, unitedly arrayed in a determined resistance of British domination.

By the course which those patriotic citizens adopted, and steadily pursued, they subjected themselves to much inconvenience. Their lives and property were not less exposed to an invading enemy, than those of the inhabitants of Georgia were generally. They also submitted, to a great extent, to break off all commercial communication with them. It is true that the whole colony was much exposed. It had an open frontier of about two hundred miles; and the settled portion which was covered with a sparse population, extended at the utmost not more than forty miles in width, in any part. But those citizens who were descended from New England parentage, had learned that the place of their father's dwellings had been attacked with hostile violence, and was menaced with other more severe inflictions, and their fraternal and patriotic spirits were roused to unite with their eastern and northern brethren, in resisting and repelling from the American shores their hostile invaders.

A general meeting of what was then denominated, the republican party, was convened at Savannah, in July, 1774; which Doctor Hall attended. This was subsequent to various parochial and provincial meetings, which had proved vexatious and abortive.

The measures adopted by that general meeting, were far from proving satisfactory to him; or his constituents. A se-

cond meeting of the same body took place after a lapse of about six months; but that also closed without doing any thing more than petitioning the British parliament to redress their grievances, and to be relieved from other measures of the parent government. This had been done once and again, by the other colonies, and as often rejected. In this instance it met with a similar reception. That the people were not excited to a more determined resistance, after all the examples that had been set before them, during the six months since their meeting in July of the preceding year, must probably be ascribed to the smallness of their numbers, and to their peculiarly exposed condition. But still, it seems difficult to persuade ourselves that they could really expect that their application would be received, and treated with more favor and regard than those of the other colonies. It cannot then be thought strange, that the result of that meeting, when reported by Doctor Hall to his constituents, instead of satisfaction, excited disgust. They deemed it temporizing and pusillanimous; and too tame for men who were determined to live or die as became freemen. The parishioners of St. John's Parish had caught the spirit that had been already kindled in Boston, and had spread throughout New England, and they resolved to adopt and pursue a course more in accordance with their own feelings, and corresponding with those of their brethren in New England. Hence they addressed themselves to the committee of correspondence in the city of Charleston, South Carolina; requesting permission to become allied with them, and conduct their commercial business in conformity to the non-importation agreement, to which agreement they had already acceded. They were not successful in this application, however, owing to different views taken by the association in South Carolina, of the terms of that association, from those of the patriotic applicants of St. John's Parish, in Georgia. These, though frustrated in this attempt, were not disheartened. They resolved to become established on an equal ground with those colonies which had confederated not to import any goods from Great Britain, although they were few in number; and in an isolated condition, as respected their political feelings and sentiments. They, by themselves, came into an agreement not to purchase slaves imported into Savannah, nor to trade with that city, nor among the non-conforming inhabitants of the colony, except under the supervision of a committee; and only for real necessities, even under those restrictions. After having pro-

ceeded thus far, (while their fellow citizens, still cherishing their irresolution, looked on, uninfluenced by their example, and remained apparently undetermined how to act,) they proceeded to elect their delegate to the next general congress, not as a delegate of the province of Georgia, but of the parish of St. John; and on the 21st of March, 1775, they chose Lyman Hall, by an unanimous vote.

A scene was soon to be exhibited before the general congress, of a novel character; and as interesting as it was new. A handful of citizens, actuated by feelings, and entertaining sentiments of patriotism, such as influenced the American people generally, situated in the southern extremity of the settlements, had elected and sent forward to congress their delegate, with his credentials. On the thirteenth of May, Mr. Hall presented himself to that assembly, and exhibited his credentials as a delegate from the parish of St. John, in the colony of Georgia. Congress, in this unprecedented case, unanimously resolved to admit him to take his seat, in the character with which he appeared, subject to such regulations as they should adopt relative to his voting. The question they had to decide, was not free from embarrassing considerations. Occasionally, votes were taken in that assembly by colonies. It was very desirable that all of them should be fully represented as colonies. Georgia vacillated, but it was hoped, if not clearly expected, that she would yet unite with the others, and it would be unwise to take any step that might tend to prevent, or even to procrastinate the union of that colony with the others; and it was equally unadvisable to do any thing which might disaffect that small, but worthy body of patriotic citizens, who had set such a noble, and praise-worthy example to their more backward and temporizing neighbors. But they were relieved from their delicate and embarrassing situation by Mr. Hall himself. He proposed to debate and listen to others; and to vote only when congress did not vote by whole colonies. This proposal being acceded to, relieved them from the difficulty.

At length the colony of Georgia roused from its apathy, laid aside its opposition to a union with the other colonies, and applied to be admitted to the coalition. In the month of July, 1775, they appointed five delegates to the general congress; among whom was Lyman Hall; who had long exerted himself (but in vain) to bring the whole people to act in concert; and who was, at the time of their accession, a

member of congress, representing a small district only of that province.

But little more remains to be recorded of this very active and eminently useful patriot. In May, 1776, he presented new credentials, which were dated in February preceding. He was present at the time of debating the great question, which was destined to be settled by the vote of congress; and after the question was carried, he affixed his name to the parchment, which contained an expression of what he had a long time desired should take place; which he had used his best exertions to accomplish, and for which he strove, endured, and sacrificed much.

In 1780, Mr. Hall appeared in congress the last time. When the British took possession of Georgia, he, with his family, was compelled to leave his residence unprotected, and retire to a distance for safety. He went with them to the North; and the existing government confiscated all his property. He returned to Georgia in 1782, before the British evacuated Savannah; and the year following he was appointed governor of Georgia. He subsequently settled in Burk county, and retired from public employment; and after a few years spent in the tranquil scenes of domestic life, having recently buried his only son, he soon followed him to the grave, about the sixtieth year of his age. His general character may be easily inferred from what has been recorded of him. He was respected in life, and lamented in death.



## GEORGE WALTON.

PROBABLY the future historians of the United States of North America will justly consider, as a fact worthy of record in the national annals, the large proportion of self-educated men, who were found among the leading revolutionary patriots, both in civil and military life; and especially of the individuals who composed that congress which declared the nation free and independent. It is certain that several of them in their youth enjoyed but limited advantages; even of those who were placed at schools by their parents, by reason of the small advantages which those schools could afford. Yet these were liberally furnished, compared with some of

their colleagues, who made a distinguished figure in public life, were eminently useful to the national councils, and attained to the highest honors, and the most important offices that their several communities had the power of conferring on their ablest citizens. These remarks are elicited by an attention to the history of the life of the gentleman, whose name stands at the head of this article.

George Walton, the subject of this memoir, was a native of Virginia, and born in Frederick county, about the year 1740. His parentage was obscure; and probably in limited pecuniary circumstances, he having been placed as an apprentice to learn the business of a carpenter. At the proper and most appropriate age for commencing the education of youths, what his advantages were we are not particularly informed; but he was not entirely destitute of instruction. For during his term of service, though his master would allow him neither time by day, nor lights by night, that he might devote what time he could spare from labor, to books; we learn that he did contrive to cultivate, and improve his mind by reading. For this purpose, he collected torch-wood, and a portion of the night, after the labors of the day were closed, was spent by him in study. He had therefore not only learned to read, but he had a very ardent fondness for it.

His subsequent life supplied him with no other classical advantages, than what he derived from the resources of his own unaided exertions. Notwithstanding all these impediments, which would have disheartened the resolution of most youths, he persevered in this manner in improving his mind by reading such books as he could procure, to the close of his apprenticeship. And when he was released from the obligation of his indentures, he was possessed of such a share of knowledge, practical, and theoretical, that he removed to the province of Georgia, and commenced the study of law with Henry Young, Esq.; a gentleman whose character, both professional and political, was distinguished in that colony.

Mr. Walton commenced the practice of law in 1774, at the time when opposition to the oppressive proceedings of the English parliament, relative to the American colonies, was maturely organized in all the provinces, except South Carolina and Georgia. But even in Georgia, though generally almost stagnant, it was commenced, and advancing onward to a state of maturity in some districts, excited and directed by some leading men of decided patriotism, and superior intelligence. With some of these Mr. Walton was early

associated, and those kindred spirits determined to rouse the whole people of that province, to feel and act with the patriotic inhabitants of the other colonies, notwithstanding the counter influence they had to combat. Mr. Young, law preceptor of Mr. Walton, was a decided advocate for the royal cause. But his independent mind would not be controlled, nor even influenced to act against his own views of right. Nor would he yield to any inducements which the state of the times presented, to allure young men of decided talents and influence, even to forbearance or neutrality. The rights of his fellow citizens were jeopardized; and the times demanded decision, and active exertions from all their friends, to vindicate and defend them against lawless usurpation, under whatever sanctions it might be attempted. Mr. Walton therefore voluntarily sacrificing all the flattering prospects placed in his view, and proffered as a reward for his adhesion to the royal interest, united with other gentlemen of similar feelings, in leading an open opposition to the then ruling powers of Georgia, and committed his rising hopes and fortune, amid no small danger to the very problematical issue of a controversy, in which the vote of a rebel against his rightful sovereign might be the consequence. He took his position on the side of the colonies, and undeviatingly pursued the straight forward course which that indicated.

The parties were now clearly defined, and in open opposition; although the patriots were, hitherto, but a feeble minority when numerically considered. Their measures were opposed, and greatly embarrassed by the temporizing policy of the royalists. But they were not to be frustrated; and by a resolute perseverance, they at length succeeded in obtaining a decided majority in the legislative assembly in their favor; and this event was, undoubtedly hastened forward, by the result of those measures which their opponents pursued with the British parliament. The contemptuous and negligent treatment they experienced, and the unceremonious rejection of their petitions and remonstrances by parliament, wrought a counteraction, and roused a spirit of determined opposition and resistance, in many, who a short time previous, were in favor of a cautious, timid, and temporizing policy. They soon united with those who had been forward in Georgia; and they together, brought the colony to act in unison with all the other provinces, in making resistance a common cause through the thirteen American colonies. Immediately a committee of safety was organized in Georgia, to superin-

cond and manage the concerns of the patriotic party ; and to hold correspondence with similar committees in other colonies. The next and deciding measure, was soon adopted. The convention of Georgia acceded to the general confederacy, and elected their delegates to the continental congress. Opposition to the British influence and authority soon attained its zenith in Georgia. A majority of the legislature were so strongly indignant at the treatment they had experienced from the parent government at home, that they totally disregarded the communications made to that body by Governor Wright. They appointed Archibald Bullock, a resolute man, and a decided patriot, president of the executive council. He had already, with four colleagues, been elected a delegate to congress. This act of the legislature, together with the entire disregard his communications met with, so incensed the royal governor, that he threatened to resort to military force, to compel them to act. The suggestion so manifestly implied in that menace, increased their indignation to such a degree, that they resolved to seize on his person, and hold him in custody. This having been effected, and the governor having forfeited his honor by breaking his parole, the regal power in Georgia was prostrated ; and the confederated hostilities with the parent state, was completed by embracing the whole of the thirteen provinces. In effecting this consummation, so long and so ardently desired, Mr. Walton stood forward with the other leading characters, and actively used his best exertions.

Mr. Walton was appointed for the first time a delegate to congress, from Georgia, by the state legislature, the beginning of February, 1776. He was again honored by a re-election to the same office, in October following. He reached Philadelphia on the last day of the session of congress, before they adjourned to Baltimore, to avoid the danger of being captured by the British army, who were approaching that city. At the time of their adjournment, it was highly necessary to have a committee remain in Philadelphia, invested with an important trust, requiring them to transact business of much interest to the public. This committee consisted of Messrs. Clymer and Morris of Philadelphia, and George Walton of Georgia. He was appointed on the third day after his arrival. This was a testimony of the confidence reposed in him by congress, which, under all the circumstances connected with his previous history, was highly honorable to his character, and must have been grateful to his feelings. Their



principal trust was of great pecuniary value, and connected with other duties of a delicate kind. But, important and delicate as the trust was, it was discharged to the entire satisfaction of congress. Indeed, peculation and frauds by public officers, in that age of stern virtue, would have fastened on their perpetrator such an indelible stain, as would have ruined them forever, in the estimation of the whole community.

He was successively re-elected to congress in the years 1777, 1778; and again in 1780. He was placed on the marine committee, appointed a member of the treasury board, and placed on several committees of minor importance by congress; in performing the duties of which he was a vigilant and active member, always evincing much useful intelligence, and great zeal in behalf of the cause he had espoused. While performing his civil functions in the great council of the nation, whose independence he had advocated and proclaimed, he was placed in military rank, in the year 1778, and appointed to the command of a regiment of militia. He appeared at the head of a battalion in General Howe's army, when Savannah was attacked by the British. In that engagement, while gallantly leading the troops under his command, to defend the place, he received a wound through his thigh, fell from his horse, and was taken prisoner by the enemy. He remained on parole until recovered from his wound, and then was sent as a prisoner of war to Sunbury. He was afterwards exchanged, and although his rank was no higher than a colonel, and the grade in which he served when taken captive, only that of a major, yet because he was at that time a member of congress, and because he had committed the heinous crime of setting his signature to the Declaration of Independence, the British government demanded in exchange, as an equivalent, a brigadier general. But after they had learned that his term in congress, for which he had been elected the last time, expired during his captivity, they consented to receive in exchange, a captain of their navy for him, who was a lieutenant colonel.

While the British continued to hold possession of Savannah, after the unsuccessful attack of combined forces, under Major General Lincoln, and Count D'Estaing, the legislature of Georgia, in October, 1779, appointed Colonel Walton governor of the state. He did not, however, retain that office long; for on the close of the session in Augusta, in January, 1780, he was again elected a member of congress for two years. But in October of the following year, he finally with-

drew from congress, in whose counsels he had so long and so faithfully displayed his unbending patriotism, in promoting the cause, and advancing the final establishment of his country's independence and liberty.

By means of some imprudent conduct of President Gwinnett, during his short but brilliant course of public life, a jealousy had risen between him on the one part, and Colonel M'Intosh and a few partizans on the other, which was productive of disastrous consequences in that community, and eventually caused Mr. Gwinnett to fall in a duel, an early victim to false honor. This discordant spirit had extended wide in the society of Georgia; and, for a time, seemed to threaten a total destruction of all harmony in the state. There seems to have existed a mutual jealousy and animosity on both sides. From the unhappy consequences of that state of public feeling, Governor Walton did not escape. He was seriously inculpated, as was supposed, by Gen. M'Intosh. But whether justly or unjustly, remains, and probably will remain undecided. We would willingly withhold the narrative; but historical justice and truth, require that it should be stated.

As General M'Intosh had become very unpopular with those who supported the civil power, so he was very popular with his adherents. He was in truth their leader, who kept the feud in commotion. The members of congress from Georgia, fearing the consequences of this state of parties, united in an application to the commander in chief, to assign General M'Intosh to another command out of the state, and supply his place with another officer of equal rank. The change was effected. General M'Intosh was ordered to join the grand army; and General Howe to take his place. The evil was not allayed, however, by this means; and the breach was yet far from being closed.

A party was formed in Savannah, whose avowed object it was to prevent the military power from encroaching on the civil. They assumed the popular name of "The Liberty Club." It had several branches in the different counties, which taking direction from that in Savannah, all acted in concert. This club, at length, attained to such power as to be able to control all appointments to offices in the state. During the time Colonel Walton acted as governor of Georgia, in 1779, a letter was forged by somebody, and transmitted to the president of congress, under signature of the speaker of the house of representatives; which, by fair implication bore hard on the character of General M'Intosh. The

speaker declared it a forgery. General M'Intosh charged Colonel Walton with a connivance in the imposture, because he gave credit to its contents, when in congress. He considered himself as unjustly accused, and much injured, by those concerned, in his military reputation. The matter, with the proofs, were laid before the legislature of Georgia, and they seemed to be embarrassed with the subject. To appease General M'Intosh, they recommended to the attorney general, to institute a prosecution against Governor Walton before the supreme court of that state, and passed a vote, censuring his conduct. At the same time, or rather on the preceding day, that same body had appointed him chief justice of the state, and placed him at the head of the only tribunal which could take cognizance of the complaint. Such an inconsistency do the records of that legislative body present. It is probably to be explained in this manner. The times were critical. M'Intosh was an influential officer, whom they wished to pacify; and for that purpose took this measure. At the same time they placed Governor Walton out of the reach of the complaint, by putting him at the head of the only court which held jurisdiction in the case. General M'Intosh and Judge Walton, were at that time respectively at the head of the civil and military departments in Georgia.

Mr. Walton had thus risen, as we have seen, from the condition of a carpenter's apprentice without education, to the highest honors and offices in the gift of the state; and, from this time, until his death, he held the most respectable appointments which the people of Georgia could bestow on him.

Six times he was elected to congress; twice governor of Georgia; once a senator of the United States, and a judge of the superior courts. He retained this last mentioned office during the term of fifteen years. In addition to these, he was one of the commissioners appointed by the United States, to negotiate a treaty with the Cherokees in Tennessee; and he was also several times a member of the state legislature of Georgia.

Mr. Walton was married, in 1777, to Miss Camber. Their only issue was one son, who bore the name of his father. And when General Andrew Jackson was governor of West Florida, Mr. Walton held the office of secretary of state; the duties of which station he fulfilled to the acceptance of the general government.

Mr. Walton was constitutionally of an ardent tempera-

ment, warm both in his attachments and enmities. One prominent characteristic of the man was decision. He partook not at all of a temporizing disposition. In his manner generally, he was stern, and kept the world rather at a distance. But he was attentive to merit; and towards young men of talents and genius he was respectful, and treated them with such amenity and kindness, as encouraged them to go forward with confidence in their honorable pursuits. He possessed a native vein of satire, which he at times indulged with much effect. It is said of him, however, that he had this dangerous weapon under such thorough discipline, that he rarely indulged it in a way which gave offence to any. His manner of living was such, as subjected him to an early attack of the gout; which followed him with successive paroxysms, and an increasing severity to the close of his life. His desire for information, which so strongly marked the morning of his life, was perpetual; and when suffering under the excruciating attacks of his disease, he found, as he used to remark to his physician, "a book the most effectual remedy for mitigating his anguish."

Mr. Walton never accumulated wealth, as he seemed not to have sought for it, as necessary for his happiness. He lived contentedly, on the emolument of his offices, and the produce of a small farm. He was able, by these means to sustain the dignity of his official station, according to the views and estimation of the society with which he was connected. It was a fixed sentiment with him, never to suffer an office which he held to be degraded by the incumbent, in his style of living, or by submitting to any treatment which would be deemed disrespectful to official dignity.

He closed his eventful life on the second day of February, 1804, in the city of Augusta, in Georgia; leaving in his enterprise and attainments, under many embarrassments, an instructive example to youths of aspiring minds, and to his country an honorable character, whose duration will be coeval with its independence and prosperity.

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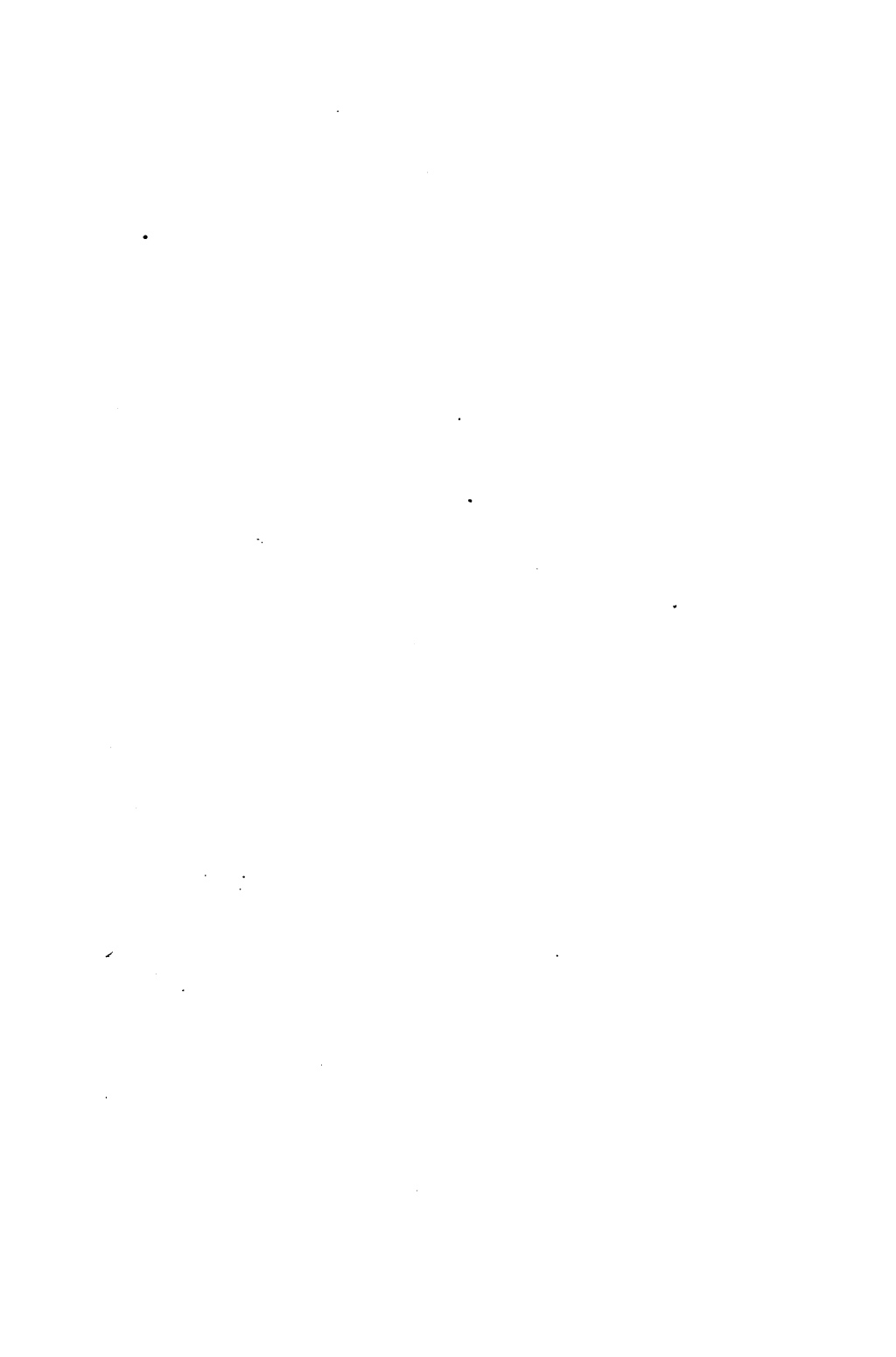




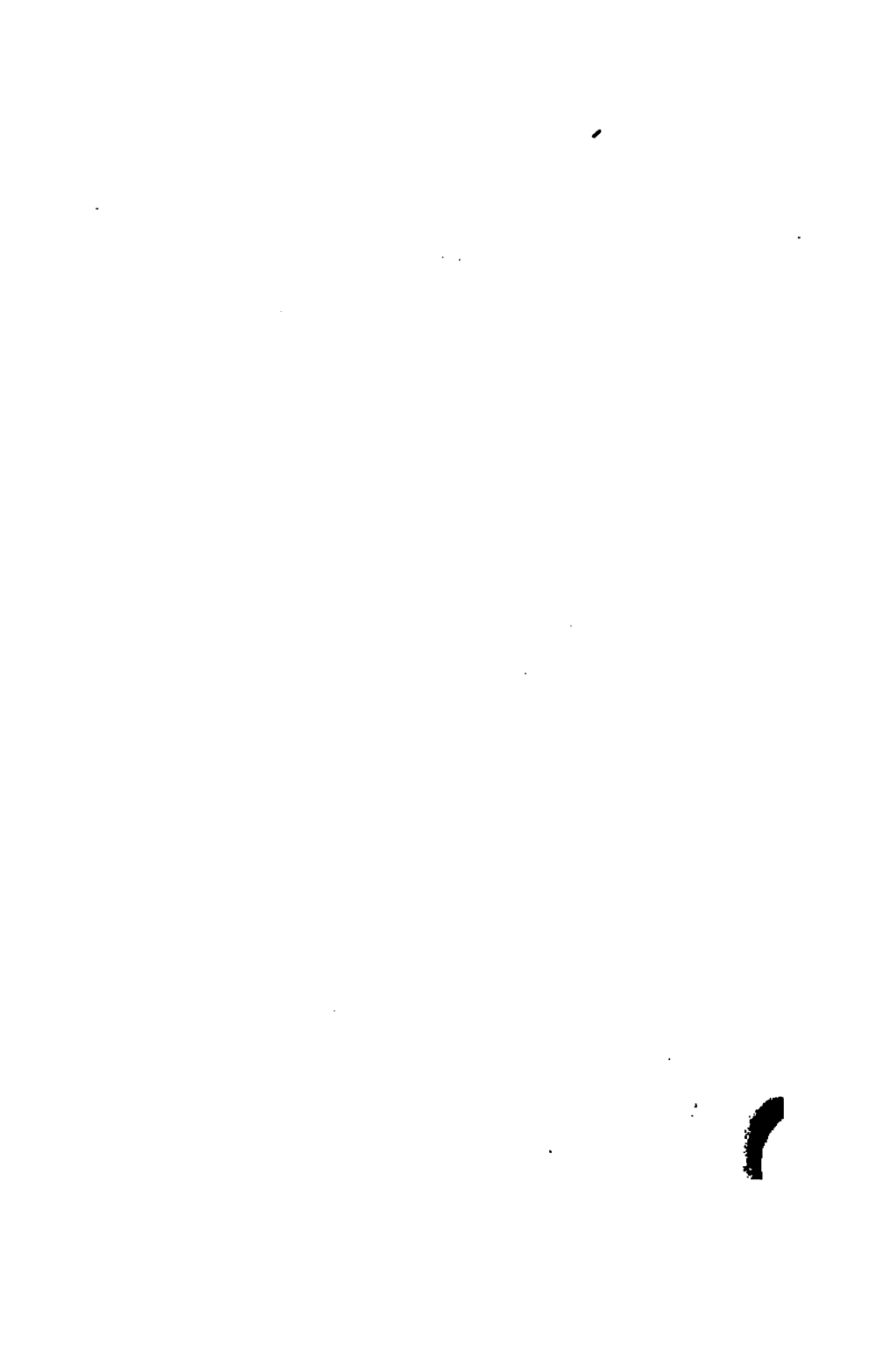
















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